THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

PEOPLE AND BOOKS

HODDER & STOUGHTON, Ltd.
PUBLISHERS LONDON, E.C.4

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

FROM THE RELIGIOUS WRITINGS OF

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON

This book of extracts, made by wife and daughter, contains matter from his books, from "The British Weekly," and from stray sources.

G. R. N.
G. M.

THE OLD MANSE,
LUMSDEN.

Made and Printed in Great Britain.
Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.

TO

HIS MANY SCOTTISH FRIENDS

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In Memory of W. Robertson Nicoll.

WRITING as I do from the shire of the home and of the University which trained him for his career, I think first of his strenuous life as a schoolboy and student in conditions which demanded faith, courage, and a spirit of prayer and sacrifice, both from the students themselves and from their families. And these virtues characterised him to the end of his life. But he had in addition a genius all his own. I remember while he was still a young minister at Dufftown hearing him preach in Free St. George's, Edinburgh, and being struck, boy as I was, with the originality of his sermon. This quality he has preserved throughout. But he combined that belief in himself to which he had good right with what does not always accompany it in men of originality—a most generous power of appreciating others, and not only for their achievements, but also for their promise. His wide versatility has already had full testimony borne to it, but there were in him what do not always go with such versatility, fundamental loyalties, both to principle and practical aims for impressing these principles upon the life of his people and carrying them out in action. With him there dies a singular

mass of knowledge, both literary and personal, and an individuality without its exact match in our time. I mourn besides the loss of one of the most just and helpful friends I have ever had.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

From "The British Weekly," May 10th, 1923.

I. *INFLUENCES*

MY MASTERS

"That simplicity which is the last step of Art."

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

I

The Tower Falls.

HE has fallen like a tower, and his removal means for many a change in the whole landscape of life.

Two orators of the first rank have appeared in our time: Mr. Bright and Mr. Spurgeon. Spurgeon's marvellous voice, clear as a silver bell and winning as a woman's, rose up against the surging multitude, and without effort entered every ear.

Mr. Spurgeon's almost supernatural keenness of observation was a great element of his influence. A well-known neighbour of his has never been able to recognise his members, because he cannot recall faces. It is not a fault; but it is a misfortune. Mr. Spurgeon at one time, as he sat on his platform, could name every one of his five thousand members. He also remembered even visitors with whom he had a very slight acquaintance; and when they came to the Tabernacle instantly detected them. He was pretty sure to contrive some way of making signs to them

before the service ended—in manners sometimes quaint enough.

II

His Triumphing Message.

MR. SPURGEON always made salvation a wonderful, a supernatural thing—won through battle and agony and garments rolled in blood. That the blood of God should be one of the ordinary forces of the universe was to him a thing incredible.

This great and hard-won salvation was sure; that is, "it did not stand in the creature"; it rested absolutely with God. It was not of man, nor of the will of the flesh. Mr. Spurgeon's hearers had many of them missed all the prizes of life; but God did not choose them for the reasons that move man's preference, else their case was hopeless. Their election was of grace. And as He chose them, He would keep them. The perseverance of the saints is a doctrine without meaning to the majority of Christians. But many a poor girl with the love of Christ and goodness in her heart, working her fingers to the bone for a pittance that just kept her alive, with the temptations of the streets around her, and the river beside her, listened with all her soul when she heard that Christ's sheep could never perish. Many a struggling tradesman tempted to dishonesty, many a widow with penury and loneliness before her, were lifted above all, taught to look through and over the years coming

thick with sorrow and conflict, and anticipate a place in the Church Triumphant.

DR. J. M. NEALE

A Gatherer of Pearls.

TO him it was given to know that the old books are better than the new. He turned back to times where thought was deeper, more believing, more holy. He gathered the pearls buried in the field which few feet but his own had trodden. In his writings he was always forward to say that nothing which he published was original. In a sense that was no doubt true, but in another sense it was absolutely untrue. For Dr. Neale had the magical art of taking comparatively commonplace and lustreless matter into his hands and passing it out ablaze.

A Dazzling Clearness.

IT is impossible to be too enthusiastic about his style in prose and poetry. It was a style of exquisite simplicity. It had all the appearance of inevitableness. So lucid was it that readers are at first tempted to believe that it came very easily, and that it might be reproduced without trouble. Dr. Neale's style, on the contrary, was the most difficult style on earth to imitate. His simplicity was that simplicity which is the last step of art, though it may at times be the first step of nature. To put it differ-

ently, he resembles Mark Rutherford in this respect, that to change a word in almost any of his sentences is to spoil everything. Again and again I have turned over in my mind sentences of Neale with an uncomfortable sense that one word or two words have gone wrong in my memory. Till I got them right the sentence was not musical or satisfying, but on turning to the original the solution was so plain that one was amazed to have missed it. Dr. Neale used no out-of-the-way expressions. The ordinary English tone was enough with him to secure the most dazzling, or rather I should say the most perfect, effects.

MARK RUTHERFORD

I

Preacher and Guide.

ALL through his books are little sermons and reflections on texts, which show what a preacher he would have made.

Is there more than this? There was more. No one knew better than he the world of forlorn hopes, insatiable desires, and restless yearnings. But there were signs that for him the discords were resolved into harmonies of spiritual beatitude—that he found the path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, and attained to the rest of faith. He writes at times as one who has seen the Everlasting Rose, as one who could say to a hostile world, "He whose name is

Legion is at our doors deceiving our intellects with subtlety, and flattering our hearts with beauty; and we have no trust but in Thee."

II

The Unswerving Pencil.

HIS achievement is after the manner of Giotto's O. There is little adornment or embroidery, but the pencil never swerves, and the round is always perfect. Only the careless will be deceived by the apparent simplicity of the accomplishment; it is the simplicity which is the last result of art. It is with nothing short of wonder that one finishes a book of which almost every sentence is in its final form. The style is capable in the author's hands of producing any effect; fire and colour come when they are needed, and with the utmost reserve, self-restraint, and economy, Mark Rutherford everywhere shows himself a magician. No one will think that we disparage our younger stylists in saying that beside him they are all children. In some of them the show of power is greater; there is more complexity, more enrichment, and far more visible effort. Here, indeed, there is no effort and no pretentiousness, yet whoever wishes to understand the possibilities of the English tongue should give his days and nights to the study of Mark Rutherford. His secret, however, will not be discovered in that way. For it is spiritual. Here is one among us who, to use his own words, speaks the

veritable reality. He has the power denied to so many of at once clutching the heart. You feel as you go on that you are reading with exposed nerves; and you lay down the book thrilled and shaken—never to be again quite what you were at its beginning.

MY FATHER

"The mingled hope and awe which seemed to make up his religion were always in evidence."

THE REV. HARRY NICOLL

(Lumsden, Aberdeenshire)

A Free Church Minister.

HE judged his lot ideal, and all he asked from Providence was that things should not grow worse. Though he had few possessions, everything was prized to the full. When he compared his allotment with that of others he compassionated the others. He had no envy, and no jealousy of men in more prominent positions. Rather he was sorry for them, because they could not possibly have time enough for reading. He coveted nothing for his children but that they should enjoy a life like his, and deeply regretted their removal to more obtrusive activities. His little manse, I see, he noted in his diary when he entered it, as "a most comfortable and commodious residence. Thanks be to God." And this was the constant temper of his mind.

The scholar was my father's hero, and when he had a scholar in his company he unconsciously behaved as one who had to make the very best of an opportunity that would soon pass, and learn as much as

possible. The other successes and dignities of life hardly entered into his mind, and did not enter at all into his manner.

My father, as far as I could ever see, had no literary ambition whatever, except perhaps the ambition to know. This marks him sharply off from almost every other human being I have encountered.

He went twice a year to the Synod at Aberdeen, had a round of his booksellers and invariably ordered many duplicates, the carrier delivered the book parcels on Thursday, and it was the rule that I should go up for them, and bring them down and be present at the opening. But on the Thursdays after the Synod, my father went up a private lane with a wheelbarrow and brought the books home with a guilty countenance.

It was etiquette that none of us should appear to know anything about those proceedings. But at last his conscience became easy. He said to me, "You are never safe with only one copy of a good book."

GIFTED FOR FRIENDSHIP

"In spite of all that has been written, friendship remains a mystery. It is a real need, and rarely supplied."

PROFESSOR ELMSLIE

"*Different to the Rest.*"

WHAT was said of Henri Perreyve is eminently true of Elmslie: he was gifted for friendship and for persuasion. There was about him the indefinable charm of an atmosphere at once stimulating, elevating, and composing. He had an inexplicable personal attraction that drew to it whatever loving-kindness there might be in the air.

In that delicate and watchful consideration for others which has been called the most endearing of human characteristics, he could hardly be surpassed. He concerned himself with the whole life of his friends, and especially with their trials and perplexities. Dr. Elmslie was indeed one of the very few men to whom one might go in an emergency, sure of a welcome more kindly perhaps if possible than would have been accorded in prosperity. His whole energies were solicitously given to the task of comforting. If things could be set right he delighted in applying his singular nimbleness of mind to the situation. He was adroit in action and almost amusingly fertile in

schemes and suggestions. He had a profound and compassionate sense of the frailty of men, their sore struggles and thick temptations; he thought the Christian Church sadly remiss in allowing so many lives to be ruined by one great fault.

Latterly he could hardly listen without impatience to gloomy forecasts of the future. He believed that all was right with the world, that Christ was busy saving it, and would see of the travail of His soul. Men prone to darker thoughts loved him very much for that.

We may apply to Dr. Elmslie words used, I think, about an American writer: his charm was of the kind that we fail to reduce to its grounds. It was like that of the sweetness of a piece of music or the softness of fine September weather.

PRINCIPAL MARCUS DODS

Faithful and True.

HE was the best friend and the most Christlike man I have ever known.

There was a generous incredulity at his heart. He was slow to wrath, and especially very slow to believe anything against those whom he cared for. He was not only willing, but even anxious to hear the other side in every controversy, even when his own mind had been resolutely made up. "Wait till you are seventy," he would say with that unforgettable smile.

I have no hope of making up his loss or of finding such another friend again. But when we see not our tokens, and when the voices that helped and cheered fall silent one by one, we think of what has been and of what yet may be.

There is peace in it, the deepest peace; but struggle the most terrible struggle, has gone before. There are flowers in it blooming quietly and sweetly, but on the edge of the burnt-out crater.

The Picture of the Stainless.

HOW were these elements put together? Who breathed into the whole the breath of life so that it became a living creature, as Luther says, with eyes and hands and feet? Take the problem of the Gospels. One may say lazily that it is an insoluble problem, and one may say it wisely. In any case, how was it that these writers succeeded in drawing the picture of the Stainless? How was it that the stream was never allowed to become turbid at any moment? One act, one word, one attitude, might have been condemned by all generations of the faithful. How were they kept from misunderstandings, these men who were always misunderstanding, when the story came to be written?

The Precious Possession.

A DEEP and thorough familiarity with the text of the English Bible is a rare and precious attainment. To have one copy in large type in which you mark passages and make annotations for a lifetime,

which you peruse and reperuse by day and by night, is an enriching thing.

The Constant Petition.

WE return over the years to the time when Robertson Smith taught Hebrew to his little class of students in Aberdeen. The voice that never faltered in any other form of utterance, sometimes faltered in prayer. But one petition was never left out of the supplication. It was this : "May we be mighty in the Scriptures."

To be mighty in the Scriptures is to know the spirit as well as the letter, to comprehend and to walk by the Scriptures behind the Scriptures.

The Fires of the Great Sun.

THE fires of the great Sun are not dying. They are lighting up the regions that are still under the shadows of night and death, and the Bible will shine on as the world's one book.

The Present Succour of Christ.

THOSE who believe in the present succour of Christ find many things in the Bible and the world grow plain and easy.

A Warning.

IN the morning I can brace myself to most things—can and do even read commentaries on the Bible—books which often show the human intellect at its very lowest.

" Bright and Sun-beshone."

THERE is nothing more fascinating in modern religious writing than its note of melancholy. Who among us has not owned the spell ? The books that we take continually from the shelf and ponder, over and over, are the books that strike this note. To read and think of the dusky strand of death interwoven in all love, seems to bring us to the heart of Christ by a nearer way than any other. Think of the part which Death plays in all the nobler literature of the world ! And assuredly the moment of calamity is the half-light in which much becomes visible that is veiled by the full glare of prosperity. Yet we may doubt very much, and we doubt increasingly, whether this is perfectly Christian. There is no melancholy, as moderns understand the word, in the New Testament. It is " bright, and sun-beshone." It passes through earthquake and through heartquake with a firm tread.

The Christ of the Gospels.

THE trouble is that many will not look straight at Jesus Christ. They turn their heads away. Stopford Brooke very rightly points out that Burns, like so many other literary men, deliberately refused to look face to face at the Son of God. The active scepticism of our day has largely gone with a profound ignorance of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. We have been told that a company of working men,

aliens from the Church, and in the majority of cases from faith, broke out into rapturous cheers after hearing a vivid presentation of the Christ Who wrought out in human life the creed of creeds. What is needed is that we should find out, for ourselves, in patient study, the Christ of the Gospels, not the Christ of the Institutes, or of the Christ of the Imitation, or of the Christ of modern biographies. It should be understood that the utmost wealth of rhetoric employed even by believers to describe Christ serves only but to blanch the glowing colour of the original story.

The Trustful View.

THE Christian people of this country ought to be told far more clearly than they have been told by many of their accepted guides who know the truth, that many of the results of criticism have been established beyond controversy, that serious opposition on the part of scholars has practically quite ceased, and that for good or for evil the situation has to be faced frankly. On the other hand, it is true that criticism is establishing more and more clearly the existence of a higher element than the merely natural in the Old Testament history. With patience, with faith, with wisdom, we may well hope to see, and at no distant day, the authority of the Bible more commanding than it has ever been. The humblest believer will find that much has been given, and that nothing has been taken away, that all the old uses are still possible, and that the old faith is more than

ever possible—the faith of "an old woman who sits reading her Bible, deeply trustful because of the world to come."

Rest and Comfort.

TIME, in the poet's words, brings roses, and the loveliest of them all is the white rose of death. But our true, abiding rest, our unfailing comfort, is to be found in the sacred Scriptures. Open them, and, if we will, we may escape from the currents and waves of the atmosphere around us, and be plunged in the profoundest sense of the presence of God.

The Immortal Audience.

IT must be said, with all respect, that the practice of the higher criticism induces men to lay an impossible stress on expressions which are not really misunderstood by ordinary people. Can we not say that the night is coming, and say it with full hearts, and yet be very sure of the dawn? Immortality cannot be secondary and inferential now. It is primary, for Christ means immortality. His incarnation meant immortality. His every word meant immortality, for what sentence in all His teaching is intelligible if there is not behind it the assumption that He was speaking to immortal beings? His dying meant immortality, for He did not die for creatures that were in a little to be mere handfuls of dust.

Read it Again.

IT is almost an insult to question whether your friend has read the Bible, but, as a matter of fact, how very few people read the Bible through ! There is a way of reading it chapter by chapter, but the Bible does not yield its secrets to any perfunctory method.

I believe in a new fresh reading of the Bible without note or comment, page by page, till the last prayer in the sacred record is sighed out, and the end comes.

In the Pages of the Gospel.

WE find Christ directly in the pages of the Gospel, as the Church will find Him to the end of time, for the Church receives the things of the Spirit of God, while outsiders count them foolishness. To deny this is to call the long story of God's grace a dream, and to contest the incontestable sign.

ABOUT CERTAIN BOOKS

"If I have read attentively the *Confessions of St. Augustine*, I may find myself, after ten years, unable to quote a single sentence, and yet I may be the better and the wiser for my pains."

Special Treasures.

"GRACE Abounding" is, without doubt, the most exquisite specimen of English prose style that exists.

St. Teresa.

THERE are few finer letters in existence than those of St. Teresa to the leading ecclesiastics of her time.

Dr. Parker's Sermons.

THE true miracle of inspiration is once more illustrated in these books. They will live, because they are filled with the strong wine of the Spirit.

Perreyve.

THE religious biography which has most impressed me is Father Gratry's *Life of Henri Perreyve*, which can be had in an English translation for half a crown.

Mr. Foster—Mrs. Gilbert.

OF special Nonconformist biographies there are two which should be in every library—*The Life of John Foster* and *The Autobiography of Mrs. Gilbert*, edited and completed by her son, a book in which the sweetest fragrance of Nonconformist piety diffuses itself.

A Trio.

IN three little books, published about the same time and under the same influence, there is, we believe, more genuine Christian passion than will be found in equal compass through the whole range of the Victorian literature. These three little books are Dora Greenwell's *The Patience of Hope*, F. W. H. Myers' *St. Paul*, and Goldwin Smith's *Does the Bible sanction American Slavery?* All three books were written under the inspiration of Josephine Butler.

Spirited.

MATTHEW BROWN'S *Life in a Puritan Colony* we never weary of reading. It is full of salt, which will not lose its savour.

Fine Religious Poetry.

MISS GUINEY has written the best religious poetry that has appeared since Miss Rossetti died.

A Book to be Written.

THE venerable J. E. Cabot, author of the admirable biography of Emerson, once told me that nothing worthy of the subject had been written on the New England transcendentalism and other phases of thought.

Fast if Necessary.

I SHOULD say that all the books a country minister really needs may be had for £40 or £50. They need not and should not be bought all at once, and for the sake of them it will often be worth while to forgo a meal.

On Liking Browning.

OF English poets, Browning is pre-eminently the Nonconformist preacher's poet, but if you have almost to burst blood-vessels trying to admire him, leave him alone.

Anglican Biographies.

IN most Anglican biographies you can say of the hero first, that he was a gentleman; next that he desired the office of a Bishop.

The Novels of the Time.

PERHAPS the majority of recent novels have been written by people who more or less rebelled against the Christian law. We cannot call to mind

a single instance in which these writers tell us that happiness was the result.

A Word to Preachers.

OF Scott, ministers should have at least *Old Mortality* and *The Heart of Midlothian* ; of George Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, especially *Janet's Repentance* and *Silas Marner* ; of Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* and *The Newcomes* ; of Dickens, any belonging to the earlier period, and of the later period *Great Expectations* ; of Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* ; of Mark Rutherford, *The Deliverance*. Mrs. Gaskell is a writer eminently suitable to religious readers for her high feeling and her pure and exquisite style. Of Lord Lytton, *The Caxtons* and *The Last Days of Pompeii* should be read ; and of George Macdonald, as much as the preacher is willing to receive.

A Book for the Discouraged.

IN this book *The Early Letters of Marcus Dods*, which has been most carefully and skilfully edited by his son, we have a revelation. Not, let me hasten to say, a revelation of weakness. Very far from that. But we have the disclosure of a mind far more sensitive than one imagined it to be, confronting a succession of mortifications and disappointments which, surely, never came before or since to a man so gifted. It is thus pre-eminently a book for the discouraged. This means that it is a book for a

very large public. For most people one finds, when one gets near to them, are discouraged, and often very deeply discouraged. It is a book especially for discouraged ministers—for those who have no popular recognition, for those who are often tempted to think that they have wandered from the path assigned to them, and are trying to fulfil duties for which they were never meant.

Hope, Fervour, and Flight.

FOR anything great in life or literature there is needed some hope, some fervour, some power of flight. The admitted dearth of notable books at present is due to the cynicism which at regular periods infects the British literary mind, and is now almost universal. How many of our ablest pens are given up at present to the splenetic service of small sarcasm, to heartless pecking at great ideas, to sneering at the march of progress! This shrivelling and withering of the mind comes from the failure of belief in God. Without that, it is to this we must sink, for there is nothing to serve or redeem in the faith that sees God everywhere in nature, and in nature only.

The Evangelicals.

THERE are many books that deal with the early Evangelicals. There is, notably, the *Edinburgh Review* article on "The Clapham Sect," by Sir James Stephen. There is an excellent little

volume on the theme, for which the writer took pains to read all the volumes of the *Christian Observer*, which was edited by Zachary Macaulay, and in which Lord Macaulay published some of his earliest productions. Above all, there is an anonymous book, *Reminiscences of Thought and Feeling*, by the author of *Visiting my Relations*, which was published by Pickering in 1852. It is a strange book, but graphic and picturesque in many passages, and devoting much attention to the Evangelical leader at Cambridge, Charles Simeon. With these books we may place Mr. Russell's Memoir of Lady Victoria Buxton.

The Life of Dr. Pusey.

DR. LIDDON regards with profound disapproval Dr. Pusey's early flirtations with the Germans, his Byronism and sentimentalism. But when Pusey passes into the man we all knew, the biographer is at home, and writes with all his characteristic force. The distinctive value of this book is that it helps us, as no other, to understand the theological value, such as it was, of the High Church movement. Dr. Liddon's fierce lunges at his opponents, Arnold, Whately, and the rest, effectually exorcise the demon of dulness.

Findlay on Galatians.

DR. FINDLAY was not a mere scholar, but had the inestimable gift of style. Two Wesleyans at least have commanded the grand style—the style

of Bunyan, Dale, and Dean Church. I mean W. B. Pope and G. G. Findlay. It was a positive pleasure to read Dr. Findlay, for the sheer beauty and dignity of his English. He wrote no book which was not worthy of him, but to my mind the deepest, the most characteristic, the most precious of his commentaries is that on Galatians, which he contributed to the *Expositor's Bible*. I have thought many times that he found himself there, as nowhere else, and this was the judgment of men like Dr. Dale and Dr. Marcus Dods. To study Dr. Findlay's book was to have a new window opened in the mind.

George Macdonald's Novels.

THE impression these books made on many young minds could never be exaggerated. How wonderful it was to see the young genius come forth to the fight against the time-honoured dogmas, with his dazzling spear of youthful scorn and beautiful indignation! The diamond point of his virgin weapons, the figure of the preacher, all glowing and poetic in a region of ultra prose—these were enough to fascinate youth, and the heart was cold that did not fall in love with his generous and tender dreams. I say the books were constructive. They were altogether noble in their tone and feeling. No one could lay them down without thrilling to the thought that truth and goodness and God are alone worth living for. Even though it might be impossible to accept their full teaching, they throbbed with a spiritual

life which could not but communicate itself. They are books of the true prophetic quality, and ought not to be forgotten.

In the best of all Macdonald's books, *Robert Falconer*, we have the largest autobiographical element. That fine character, Mrs. Falconer, in whom we see the grander type of character which Calvinism has produced in Scotland, a character in which a flame of true religion burned under a thick and hard crust, was his own grandmother, upright, just, severe, and yet at heart loving, with nothing mean about her. The boy's soul and hers came into contact, and he saw her when he wrote *Robert Falconer* in the tender light of holy memories.

As for Robertson, he scarcely believed in the recognition of friends in eternity. Macdonald, on the contrary, was vehemently persuaded of the sanctity and permanence of love, and to him a heaven was a home heaven. Only those who have read his books through can understand the strong invigorating note of faith which runs through them. And all of them are in unison with the first chords he struck.

Paton's Story.

WE cannot imagine the time when believing hearts will not glow over the story of Paton's work in the New Hebrides. The book has signal literary merit. Dr. John Paton was one of the very few men who did not need to acquire the power of expression by toil and painstaking. Whenever he set his

pen to work the result was fresh, spontaneous, vivid, and arresting. The emotion that pulses through every page, the noble passion for Christ and the souls for whom Christ died, set the heart on fire.

Do you know Mr. Fearing?

NEARLY all believe that they have read *The Pilgrim's Progress*. They know something about it, for they have read about the fight with Apollyon, about the Slough of Despond and Vanity Fair, and they think they have done enough. But if they are candid, they will confess on reflection that they don't know Mr. Fearing, Bunyan's favourite and most beautiful character. Missing that, they have missed a great deal. They go back, if they are wise.

"*The Scarlet Letter*."

IF there is any reader whom these words have fired with any ambition to know the best, I advise him to procure straight away the first volume of the lovely edition of Hawthorne, just published by Messrs. Service and Paton, and containing *The Scarlet Letter*. Now for the first time so far as I know in England, Hawthorne is presented in a worthy form, where one can read him with a true satisfaction. The book is cheap, the story is enthralling, the style shows such mastery of the English language as is possible only to a very few in any century. There are deep

lessons of life in the book, lessons that are of more value than many sermons, lessons that, even to unsusceptible readers, give a permanent bent to the mind.

"*Just a Young Girl.*"

THE objection is that Tennyson's "May Queen" was silly. She had but a few simple thoughts in her mind—Robin, the lover; little Effie, the sister; the triumph of her brief queenhood, the flowers and birds, her mother, her clergyman, and, at last, her Saviour. She was not a Girton girl. She could not address a public meeting. I daresay she took her political views from her father. She was not a great reader, I suppose; she had no literary talent, and could never have written a popular realistic novel or a study of heredity. She lived before the times of evolution and the higher criticism, and I fancy she would have known nothing of them, even if she were living now. She was just a young girl in a Lincolnshire farmhouse, and, if she had lived, she would have married a young farmer, and have made him very happy. Nothing in her? Nothing—except goodness, innocence, love, and faith. Nothing more worth talking about.

A Statesman's Writings.

MR. GLADSTONE'S truly detestable style seems to have been his from the beginning, and he never got rid of it. It must be owned also that the

value of his theological opinions is exceedingly small. Mr. Gladstone pottered at theology all his life, and a man of his gifts could not fail sometimes to say good things. But the truth is that he rarely understood the nature of any great theological question he ever handled.

His piece on "Robert Elsmere," along with his criticism of Macaulay, may be described as the best of his writings. But he was most unhappy when he ventured on the ground of the critics.

What remains to us is the memory of that venerable head, humbly bowed in prayer, of the grand and constant fidelity to duty, of that marvellous radiance of faith which transfigured and ennobled the most potent career of the nineteenth century.

Gethsemane Books.

THERE are a few books peculiarly dear to the heart of the Church, which I may call Gethsemane books. The chief are the lives of Brainerd, Martyn, and McCheyne. All of these died young, not without signs of the Divine blessing—but prematurely—rich and fervid natures exhausted and burnt out. I do not overlook physical causes and reasons, but in each case there was a Gethsemane. Read the memoir of Brainerd, which Wesley published in an abridged form. It was written by Jonathan Edwards, the greatest intellect of America. Mark its reserved passion, its austere tenderness. Read the story of young Jerusha Edwards, who followed her

betrothed so soon, and you feel that you have done business in great waters. Read Brainerd's aspirations —" Oh ! that I might be a flaming fire in the service of my God. Here I am ; Lord, send me ; send me to the ends of the earth ; send me to the rough, the savage pagans of the wilderness ! "

" *Rabboni*," *by Canon Anthony Deane.*

HIS chapters and paragraphs move on in masterly sequence. The style is lucid, forcible and felicitous, lit up with brilliant epigrams. In these days of hurried and slovenly writing, how we respect the author who never descends into a sentence which is either otiose or obscure !

The book represents clarified and condensed thinking of no common order. Even though you may hesitate to adopt all its positions, you are constrained to admire the sweet and reverent spirit, the deep-hearted faith, which breathe throughout this *Study of Jesus Christ as Teacher.*

MY PUBLISHER

"I have ever had experience of your enterprise, liberality, and confidence."

The Friend of the Distressed.

MR. HODDER was consulted in many delicate and anxious affairs. Parents whose children had gone wrong, young men who had fallen, religious workers who had been wrecked—all came to him, and all received the best help he could give them. I think he rose to his greatest in those negotiations where tact and fineness of feeling are supremely necessary. No word of the many secrets disclosed to him ever passed his lips. He was a man absolutely to be trusted, and not even in the most confidential conversation did he ever betray a trust or say a word that might lead to its betrayal. Once, I remember, he came into my room and threw himself listlessly into a chair. This was so different from his ordinary ways that I said, "What is the matter?" He answered, "It is impossible to get another chance for a man who has broken down." Compassion was, I think, his most distinctive quality. He was a barometer, not at all in the sense that he flattered and fawned upon the successful, but in the sense that when he sought you out, you might know that he believed you to be in need. He could talk about the evils of indiscriminate

charity, but if ever a man remembered the maxim : "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away," that man was Matthew Hodder. Latterly he never went out without a stock of half-crowns, and any suppliant might be sure of half a crown at least, no matter how often he had been found out.

"It is not with mere misery that we think of Dr. Denney. We are happy in the remembrance of a man in whose presence we felt that God and goodness could not be doubted. But the news of his death was a blow on the heart. Alas, my brother, very pleasant wast thou to me."

DR. ALEXANDER WHYTE

The Devout.

ON thinking over our long association, it becomes clear to me that his main characteristic was his intense humility.

Evangelical humility is the note of all he preached and wrote. This was never a base humility. It never passed into a painful and haunting sense of inferiority. That feeling is the ruin of true humility, and Whyte, who was in all ways a just and faithful knight of God, had none of it. One thing for which he ardently prayed has been denied him. He longed with the whole passion of his powerful nature for a reunited Scottish Church. His death should lead to a greater visible earnestness in this vital matter. "The King's business requireth haste." What a gift he was to his Church, to his nation! How wide were the irradiations of faith and love and hope and repentance that came from his intense and prayerful life! And

he died as we should have wished him to die. Literally, he fell asleep in Jesus.

BISHOP WALSHAM HOW

I

His Contentment.

DR. HOW from the beginning of his labour was a signal example of diligence and content. He was for nearly thirty of his best years rector of a comparatively small country parish. Yet from morning service at eight o'clock, till he laid down his pen about midnight, every day was fully occupied, and when he took up larger responsibilities he could say that no man can do more than work his whole time. It was said of him by a friend, and everything bears it out, that he was perfectly and absolutely content to live and die in his little parish. This is monitory and suggestive. It may be doubted whether Christians have taken fully to heart the parable of the talents, whether they clearly realise that our talents may be and must be doubled wherever we are placed, and that in every sphere, no matter how humble, there is always the opportunity and the call for unrelaxed diligence. There are Christians who are amiable and slothful, of whom their friends say that they have great talents, which have never yet found full development; Christians who salve their consciences by always talking about some great work they mean to do before they die. So far as we have noticed these people are looked upon affectionately,

without any passion of moral reprobation. Yet surely there can be no sin greater than this, no guilt heavier or more damning than that of the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin.

His Industry.

QUIET spheres seem to give excuse for large intervals of leisure, but the Christian has no right to any leisure, beyond the necessary rest. How found that he had more than enough to do. He would not even waste a few odd minutes. He would go to his writing-table and add a few lines to the book he was engaged upon. He ruled his life, as life can only be ruled, by being most absolute and rigid in method. When he knew that a letter had to be written, he would go and address the envelope so that it might serve as a reminder. And all this work was done with the most unbroken and steady content. In one Church ministers are asked at their ordination whether they will "faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully" do their work. It is in the cheerfulness that most of them fail.

His Modesty.

HOW had his trials, like every man. He says that the only people with whom he was very successful were old women, but he was patient with the strange vacillations of morning and night that come to every Christian toiler. However narrow any

man's allotted space of dominion may be, it is enough —enough for all his time and for all his energy.

II

Facing Death.

THERE is something very admonishing in the manner in which the old man faced death. He saw it coming long before, but said little. He made all the preparations he could, wrote the fullest and clearest directions to his children on every matter, and even such small things as instructions to his successor with respect to ventilators and other details. He continued in excellent spirits, enjoying everything, and went on preaching. He arranged a fishing holiday in Ireland, and had some good sport. He was glad in the scenes of the beautiful world he was soon to leave. He had none of the morbid feeling that these things were shadows soon to pass.

There was nothing of the craving :

"O Paradise! O Paradise! who would not long for rest?"

He was in the strait, no doubt, which St. Paul of old was in. He was willing to depart and be with Christ, which is very far better, and yet willing to remain in the flesh as long as that was expedient for any. Again, we ask, is not this in the full sense Christian, the thankful acceptance of all the blessings of earth? All of them were lightly held, and though he said little, there lay, no doubt, on all that last year of waiting, the foreglow of the coming Angel.

JAMES MARTINEAU

A Noble Obscurity.

WHAT is most admirable in Martineau's life is its lofty and serene dignity. "A great soul in a small house" was the spectacle that fixed Lacordaire's admiration. If the great soul dwells contentedly, nobly, in the narrow surroundings, then he deserves reverence. As Hutton said, Martineau would have drawn thinkers from all parts of the world if he had lectured in any great university, but, as a matter of fact, he was engaged in discoursing to "two or three boys in a corner." What he did for these "boys" is shown in the fact that the great books of his last years were mainly recasts and digests of the lectures he prepared for them. There is something very noble also in the patience with which Martineau worked without recognition. Up to his sixty-fifth year he attracted very little attention.

PROFESSOR HENRY DRUMMOND

I

Naturally Virtuous.

BORN in a Christian home, ever under the influence of the most earnest and loving Christianity, he was himself not only naturally good, but naturally virtuous, to use the subtle French distinction. His tall, athletic form, his beautiful face, his rare union of strength and gentleness, of courage and tenderness, of boldness and sanity, gave him a charm which can

be partly accounted for, but which in the end of the day we must call magnetic, for it could never be completely reduced to its grounds. He never showed that he had himself experienced the agonies and travails of religious conflict. But no man was more familiar with the battles and the defeats of his fellows. Humble and simple, always at the furthest remove from self-sufficiency, he was yet self-sufficing. The incalculable work he did as a father confessor of multitudes was apparently accomplished with triumphant ease. He was always willing to hear, to help, and to give, but he himself never asked anything, never seemed to need anything, and so far as one could see, had nothing to grieve over in the past, nothing to fear in the future, nothing to turn for to any friend save to his Saviour Christ. Though he well knew the sorrowful side of life, he himself never seemed till the last to be entangled in the coils of pain. His temperament was joyous, and he lived life with unfailing zest from sunrise to sunset. Such natures are so rare and separate that they cannot fail to be influential.

II

The Student's Guide.

WITH the largest breath of sympathy, he yet held a faith which never seemed to be shaken or even clouded. In addition, he had very unusual endowments as an orator and as a writer. No one we have ever listened to impressed us quite in the same way. His words were the effortless utterance of a man with a message, a man who could clothe his

thoughts in the simplest and at the same time the most shining vesture.

Without a very strictly defined theology, he preached Christ as a potent influence whereby we can become what we are not, through intimate communion with perfect love and perfect holiness. Thus he won his immense success with the most difficult classes—especially with students. They saw in him the likeness of Christ, and they gave him earnest heed.

DR. JOHN CAIRNS

A Generous Nature.

DR. CAIRNS was enthusiastically human, full of the sympathies which are at the basis of human character. He was naturally drawn to men and women, aware of the richness of the common vital stock, sure about any stranger that if he knew him he would find much to love. If there is any natural gift that Christ takes under His protection, it is this.

DR. R. W. DALE

Living Christianity.

TO Dr. Dale came, later than to most of us, the experiences of bereavement, sickness, and weariness, which test the reality of faith and the power of endurance. He encountered them bravely and tenderly. He was refined, ennobled, and taught by pain. It opened up to him such new reaches and depths of experience that he wittingly turned aside

from many things that had claimed his care in order to develop the positive argument for Christianity, on which he had all his life relied. And so in him was fulfilled the great word that the men of sorrows are the men of influence in every walk of life. Not without tears was the New Testament written, not without tears can it be understood. In his earlier works Dr. Dale had consistently made his ultimate appeal to the experiences of penitents and saints. He came to see in his last years that he had been wiser than he knew. He came to see, and he was able to show, that the true verifying of Scripture lies in its application from point to point in life. This is the highest criticism, and it is a criticism which is independent of every other.

DR. ROBERTSON SMITH

A Great and Simple Scholar.

IT was to the Church and to Scotland that he belonged—so we shall always think. Whatever he accomplished as investigator, or teacher in other fields, it was not by his own choice. He would fain have been in the Church—sharing its work of lifting the world to higher levels than those of time and nature. Like the Scottish metaphysician, Dr. Thomas Brown, in the words so beautifully commented on by Mackintosh, he chose to be buried with his kindred. The mind that soared and roamed over every region of knowledge, that measured itself unvanquished with the strongest of its time, turned back to the scenes

and the friends of youth. He has been laid to rest in the Keig churchyard by the graves of his father, his brother, and his brilliant and beautiful sister.

DR. GEORGE MATHESON

I

The Blind Preacher.

IT was a Pauline life, as Dr. Macmillan with real insight points out. Matheson, like St. Paul, had his thorn in the flesh, but like St. Paul he allowed nothing to foil the energy of his spirit. He believed, like St. Paul, that in each condition there is a divine spring of help, and that, however calamitous one's circumstances may be, it is possible so to alter oneself as to make them an aid and not a hindrance in the progress of the spirit. His content was not a poor passive acquiescence. Matheson found a clear call to exertion, and the call was obeyed. He was called to patience and fortitude; none was more patient and more brave. He was called to joy, and his heart flowed out in gratitude and praise. So he grandly transformed what seemed to others mere wounds and pangs and fetters into strength and gladness and freedom. This was the glory of George Matheson.

II

The Kindly Light.

HE proved, and proved again, the reality of the spiritual light. To him the East was not silent and relentless. The Dayspring from on high

visited him more and more gloriously, and the finest book he ever wrote is his *Studies of the Portrait of Christ.* Even in the darkness of this world the kindly light was about his feet and on his face. He was strengthened to the end, and strengthened many by the ancient succours of the soul.

He was indeed one of the most brotherly and generous of men. "Might we meet when twilight has become day!"

DR. BARNARDO

The Lover of Children.

LATTERLY he became somewhat deaf, and was wont to carry a fearful and wonderful instrument which he described as an ear-trumpet. I never saw him use it for the purpose of hearing, but he employed it freely in thumping the back of his companion, whether to enforce the point of a joke or of an argument. He would run round the table pouring himself out, and then as his climax approached, he seized his ear-trumpet firmly. But one soon noticed that this great effervescence was not first or last among his qualities. He had that strange tenacity possessed by a few, to which it seems as if almost everything yields at last. Dr. Barnardo had taken up his work in life and he clung to it all the time.

The children from whom others would turn away went straight into his heart as through an open door. He seemed to know every child of his multitude, or

at least to know something of every one. He loved them and yearned over them as if they had been his own dear children. For nearly all his time I imagine that his working day was sixteen hours, and he seemed to hate the thought of a complete holiday.

If the mystical saying is true, that all love is returned, he must have had much of that. Anyhow, he never complained and he never boasted. He belonged to the small transfigured band whose reward is with them and their work before them.

COUNTRY MINISTERS

"These are men to whom Scotland owes an incalculable debt—men who take the highest place at college, and thereafter contentedly settle in remote parishes, where they live, labour, and, for the most part, die. I bless God I have known such."

Bell of Midmar.

WE remember vividly John Peden Bell of Midmar, a man venerated over the whole countryside as a saint and a thinker. When he came to preach for his brethren the hearer felt himself honoured, and did his best to understand the profound arguments by which the preacher tried to vindicate the greater doctrines of the Christian faith. It was enough to see the true kingly character of the Christian in Mr. Bell's face. Many country ministers have been Moderators of the Synod, and others have taken a leading part in its guidance. Alexander Young of Logiealmond, at an incredible age, preached to the Synod with amazing energy from a text which might almost be called a United Presbyterian text: "I will make Him my Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." Who that ever read it can forget George Gilfillan's beautiful paper on Jamieson of Methven, the poet preacher? Gilfillan heard him as a boy, when he took for his text the words in Micah, "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine

heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old," and never forgot the lingering emphasis with which he repeated the words "solitarily in the wood," words which seemed to him unspeakably dear and suggestive. Jamieson's little book of letters contains things as good as any in Cowper's. Speaking of a young girl, who died suddenly in the very springtide of her early promise, he says: "It seems she was at the class on Monday; how would her youthful spirit be surprised ere Thursday to find herself in a land of light and brilliancy, where she had only to open her eyes to read of knowledge, and to take her place among the accomplished spirits of the just made perfect!" But time and space would utterly fail us if we tried to illustrate the richness and occasional splendour of the gifts that were ungrudgingly devoted to the service of Christ and His Church by United Presbyterian ministers in obscure corners of the land.

Robertson of Irvine.

WHO can ever forget an evening with him—his unbounded discourse, his vivacity, his speaking face, and above all his unfeigned humility, openness of heart, and desire to help and cheer?

A hearer remembers how he gave out the softly musical words:

> "As streams of water in the south,
> Our bondage, Lord, recall."

To hear Robertson reading that must have been like hearing Newman reading in St. Mary's the text: "For Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all"—a thing which, as John Shairp tells us, was never to be forgotten.

When he was called to Glasgow Robertson made a long and highly characteristic speech. Here is his idea of a country minister: "Child of those childless—father of their orphans—brother of them all; entering into all their household joys and griefs in the most homely and familiar way; interested in the father's work and wages, in the children's education, in the son's going to sea."

REMEMBERED SERMONS

"My own view is that what people go to church to hear about is religion, and by religion I mean Christianity, and by Christianity I mean the truths that are inseparable from the Cross. The ablest, the freshest, the most impressive sermon I heard in Chagford was that preached by a layman in the Bible Christian Chapel."

The Faith of Robertson Smith.

PROFESSOR ROBERTSON SMITH added in Aberdeen the accomplishment of preaching to his many other accomplishments. It was he, who, addressing an evangelical meeting in the North Church, gave out for his text, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and began: "He who spoke these words is present at our meeting to-night."

Dr. Martineau's Best.

"THE Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." No one who has read Dr. Martineau's wonderful sermon on the passage—perhaps the most magnificent of all his sermons, one in which that great master of religious language has used, without straining, his utmost resources—will ever hear the words without remembering it.

James Reid of Eastbourne.

THE stillness and eagerness of the listeners were extraordinary. The prophetic passages about China, also the certain failure of civilisation apart from Christianity, will be remembered by those who heard them—not for the skill with which they were phrased, though that was not small, but for their intrinsic force. I desire and expect for Mr. Reid a great future.

A Man with One Talent.

WHEN I was a boy of fifteen, I went to the East Church, to hear Professor Flint, then of St. Andrew's. I had never been in an Established Church before, and had some feeling of guilt. But soon the passionate eloquence of the preacher, the rush of his words, and his intense, pallid face, lighted up by genuine enthusiasm, moved me. He was the first preacher I ever heard who spoke to students in the sense that he made them feel that he understood them. I cannot recollect the text, but the drift of the sermon went to show that a man with one talent might be as happy as a man with ten, if only he made the best use of what he had received.

Dr. John Watson.

WHEN I first heard him, he preached on the character of Jacob; he stated the case for and against like an accomplished lawyer, and then

summed up like an impartial judge. It was intensely interesting, but the real effect was produced by a few electric sentences at the end.

The dangers and the sorrows of his people were ever in his mind. More than once after his death he was called an interpreter. He knew men so well that he spoke home to them ; he knew life so well that he understood the Bible and could make it a living book. His familiarity with life's comedy and tragedy saved him from cynicism and caricature, and kept him sound and sweet at heart.

Climax upon Climax.

THE most popular preacher, beyond comparison, was Arthur Mursell, who used to come to lecture, and who could crowd the largest churches in Aberdeen to the roof. Only once in my life—although I have heard Mr. Gladstone's finest efforts—have I seen an audience fairly set ablaze, and that was in Mr. Arthur's church, under a sermon by Mr. Mursell. The text was, " For her sins have gone up unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." The sermon was a terrific arraignment of the Church of Rome, and climax was piled on climax, till, in the end, the preacher burst out with an anticipation of Rome's destruction, and people turned round and gazed on one another in their pews. I saw the sermon in print and was not struck by it, but the impression of the hour was never to be forgotten ; one of the select experiences of life.

Jowett Seizes and Holds.

DR. JOWETT took for his text the passage in Romans : " For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

In Dr. Jowett everything preaches. The voice preaches, and it is a voice of great range and compass, always sweet and clear through every variety of intonation. The eyes preach, for though Dr. Jowett apparently writes every word of his sermons, he is extraordinarily independent of his manuscript. The body preaches, for Dr. Jowett has many gestures, and not one ungraceful. But, above all, the heart preaches. I have heard many great sermons, but never one at any time which so completely seized and held from start to finish a great audience. I had in my view quite a long row of people, and, so far as I could see, not one ever turned away from the preacher.

I am not a very good listener. Sometimes a name or a phrase sets me off wool-gathering, and I confess that when Dr. Jowett referred to Casaubon as an example of the righteous man, I began to think how unjust George Eliot had been to Casaubon, how ridiculous it was to call him an old fossil, when he was a little over forty ; how absurd it was to say that his work was worthless because he did not read German ; and, above all, how cruel it was in George

Eliot to put Mark Pattison and his wife in her novel. But, with that exception, I did not wander an instant.

I

The True Path.

DR. JOHN KER was the great sermon-writer of the United Presbyterian Church.

But Dr. Ker was much more than a sermon-writer. He was a noble preacher. Though his health was always feeble, and he was incapable of "oratory" in the popular sense, he was among the most impressive and fascinating speakers I have ever heard. One week-night service he conducted in a country church it is impossible to forget.

The text chosen was, "Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." I do not remember the formal division, but the three words dwelt on were Way, End, Rest. First there was an End; things were not always to be perplexed and troubled.

If there was wisdom at all, the world must end, and give way to a new and higher sphere to them that trust God. There was a way to that end; secure, clear to all who trust the promises, even though striking sometimes through the sand, or by a path beset with thorns. Each had his own way; an influence within his reach which could be exerted by none other. Take the true path, and rest would come at the end, and the final appointed place for which the soul was fitted: "Thou shalt stand in thy lot." Heaven was human and homelike. Those

who lived with us and cheered us would surround us there. It would be good to meet Moses and Paul and the saints, but better to meet the longed-for and the lost, in the day when God healed the breach of His people and bound the stroke of their wound.

II

Consoled and Refreshed.

EVERYONE went away comforted. All the aim of the sermon was to turn away the hearers from the preacher's personality ; but if any thought of it, they must have felt that they were addressed from a singular altitude of experience, and knowledge, and power.

The more one saw of him, the more astonishing did the width of his culture seem. He seemed to know more than anyone else about everything literary ; talk about the *Turkish Spy*, or Mrs. Browning's early poetry, or the folklore of Brittany, and he could give you points in all.

It is something to be a person of wide miscellaneous reading ; if there are many, I have not met them. But it is not much, after all, to have read voraciously. Dr. Ker had done a great deal more ; he was a finished scholar, who never dropped the student's habit for all his love of literature.

Dr. Pulsford says "Luminous."

THE best thing in Pulsford's appearance in New College Chapel was the sight of the great teacher himself. He spoke with his old vehement

impatience of this imprisoning clay, with his old rapture of the luminous body which is to be the vehicle of the freed spirit. It was worth while to go there simply to hear him pronounce the word "luminous." Surely no one, since St. Paul, has so earnestly desired to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven.

A Missionary Sermon.

I RECALL vividly the late Dr. Archibald Watson of Dundee, who was the companion of Dr. Norman Macleod in an Indian mission tour. He preached very sensibly and quietly for half an hour on Indian missions, and then he raised the dread question as to the fate of the heathen. After picturing with rising emotion the many virtues and the sore oppressions of the people, he said, "I cannot bring myself to believe that such men are lost, and" (catching his breath with a heart-sob, and speaking with great intensity), "I know that the Judge of all the earth will do right."

INNOCENT MEMORIES

"Life, as it goes on, tends to become so sordid, that the heart grows hard, if it ceases to converse with the past."

MR. DEWAR OF FOCHABERS

Filled with Charity.

MR. DEWAR of Fochabers' innocent memory must long linger in the region where he lived and loved so long. In his early days Mr. Dewar was an intrepid champion of the Free Church. He took a prominent part in its fiercest controversies, and always bore himself well. But when I knew him he was an old man, and to me he stands out as the one perfect embodiment I have ever seen of the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, a chapter which, it is worth remembering, was written not by St. John, but by St. Paul. Indeed, I never read or hear that chapter without thinking about Mr. Dewar. It was not that his powers or faculties or memories were gone. It was other than that. Everything was fused in love. Even when speaking of his bitterest adversaries (and in the Disruption his adversaries were very bitter), he spoke with a large and pitiful charity. To one cast in such gentle mould, no doubt the world came gently; but he, too, had his trials, and they were taken very calmly and quietly, though

it was but too easy to wound a heart so kind. Mr. Dewar, too, received young ministers with ardent affection. He foresaw the brightest things from their beginnings. It was no pain for him to be eclipsed in popularity by a younger preacher. His heart was in the cause, and his joy in the thought that the banner would still be carried when his hands had relaxed its hold.

MR. M—— OF SPEYSIDE

I

The Majesty of an Old Minister.

A MORE ardent, fiery, courageous spirit I have never known. He had been struck by paralysis, and thus his youthful force was much abated. Yet you could see even then what it must have been. Impulsive, vehement, fearless, he was a true soldier of the Cross. Like his brethren of the same period, he had much of the majesty of the old parish minister. From his beautiful manse, which overlooked the Spey, you could see a great tract of country, and you could see that he regarded himself as the one minister of the region. I used to spend a day and night at his house every six months at least. He had much to say, and much that was well worth hearing, but invariably he had to tell you about two things. They have been so impressed upon my mind that in the total ruin of memory I think I shall keep them. One was a long story about a call which he received many years before from Paisley. He did not accept it, and did not encourage the overtures made to him; but sweet in

the old man's mind was the remembrance of how he had been unsuccessfully wooed. Another great event in his life was his preaching one Sunday in Regent Square, London, when Dr. Hamilton was minister. There was a good congregation in the morning, but he was told by the anxious elder who was his host that he must expect very few in the evening. Remembering the clannishness of the Morayshire loons in London, Mr. M—— thought differently. He did not contradict his host, however, but listened in silence while he explained. When they got to the church they were told that the building was crowded. I forget what the collection for the day was, but I am tolerably sure it was more than £100. With what delight this story was told! Out of the old man's past these two events stood vividly.

II

Bathed in Light.

MR. M—— was a true old Highland gentleman, who never on any occasion offered advice. But when he was asked for it, it was good to see the serious earnestness with which he went into the case, how anxiously he made himself acquainted with every circumstance, and how eager he was to do his very best. You saw him then to be a wise and experienced man, and you saw, too, how little personal interest counted with him when the cause of Christ was concerned. It was much to see him on the evening of a Communion Sunday after he had

preached, in spite of fears and infirmities, with the utmost earnestness and copiousness. He was quiet and gentle ; his mind evidently still lingering on the high themes of which he had spoken. I see him now as he looked on one of those evenings—worn and weary, yet on fire ; as one who had been caught up to the third heaven and had but newly descended.

II. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

WORK

" We were born to suffer as well as to work, and the better we work, the better we shall suffer."

" *Come, labour on.*"

THE great safeguard for nearly all of us is to be found in almost unrelaxed industry. It is pernicious also to despise certain forms of labour. Utopia itself will need scavengers. But " I will make thee ruler over leisure," is a great promise to be perfectly fulfilled on high, where endless service means endless rest.

Common Sense.

IT is never pleasant to say " no," and yet humanity is not easily succoured, and it is only now and then that efficient and timely help can be given.

" *Too Busy.*"

A PHRASE I once heard rings in my ears—" The man who was too busy to do his duty." It is no excuse for a business man that he serves his church well, if he serves his employer ill.

The Need for Endurance.

LET us hope not to escape lawfully from law. Irksomeness, strain and struggle are the notes of every true and valiant life. We must bear burdens and face difficulties while we may, with that courage that is the root of all virtue. We are right when we claim the work that fits us best; we are right when we protest against cramping and stifling conventionalities. But we are wrong—wrong to the centre—when we rebel against toil, against difficulty, against disappointment, against wholesome pressure. It has been said well that "the deepest root of moral disorder lies in an immoderate expectation of happiness." Nor does happiness dwell with lawlessness. Though we sold our clocks and watches, and broke both the tables of stone, we should still be miserable. For the law is written in our hearts.

The Peace of the Labourer.

THE best day, the happiest day, is the day when every hour is estimated with a most scrupulous care until all the programme of work is accomplished, and it is marvellous how in labour the torments of the spirit are scattered. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said Christ, and the labourer understands the union.

Persevering.

IT has been proved true over and over again that those who were firm of purpose, and set their faces to the north wind and the winter, were rewarded

by the falling down of the walls that held them in, and became free men.

On Encouraging the Worker.

THERE is no time at which a word of kindness is so sweet as in the early years. Many men, middle-aged or old, could still repeat to you the scanty words of praise which they heard from their teachers and professors at a time when the heart was sensitive and warm.

The boy who has been working well at school ought to be told of it by those he loves best. It will nerve his heart for the struggle, and it will strengthen those ties the firmness of which we are all apt to take too much for granted.

Kindness to the Stupid.

AS you thank God humbly for His gifts and mercies, you will dedicate them to the service of those slow, stupid people who are blind and deaf to so much that makes your own life worth living.

On Spending One's Leisure.

I HAVE always found that the happiest people are those who give part of their leisure to altruistic work, who go out in the evenings and teach in schools, or speak in working men's institutes, or work for their churches, or serve some great and difficult cause. There is something in labour of that kind which makes

life sweet. I know many hardworking and successful business men who do this, and who care more about that part of their lives than about the money-making part. They always speak about the work as if there were no other. And yet some of us who do nothing of that kind are very happy in our chosen labour, and long for the leisure hours to come. Is this wrong? I do not know. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?"

CIRCUMSTANCE

"Childhood and youth should be made happy as far as possible."

Thinking It Over : a Duty.

I AM convinced that multitudes have yielded too soon. In the lives of great men we may read that the tide often turned just when they were on the point of despair. I call to mind Carlyle, Napoleon, Cromwell, and many others. In the same way, the surroundings which are hostile to the life and peace of the spirit may be escaped from, and, if the door can be forced open, they ought to be escaped from.

The Divine Drift.

FOLLOW no advice unless you are personally convinced that it is right. If you have decided a matter after full consideration, do not imagine afterwards that your choice was wrong. Wait, and you will see that you did the right thing. Most of us in the course of our lives have come to a fork in the road. We did not know along which direction we should proceed, but after a time we made a selection. Now we think it would have been well if we had made another. Two situations were offered to us at one time, and we chose, let us say the humbler, and have been allowed to remain in it. We think

to ourselves, " If I had taken the higher place I should have done better." No, not better, and if you wait long enough you will see a light will fall upon the past, and you will find that your own will had much less to do with your choice than you imagined, that there was a deep divine drift which has vindicated itself.

God Knows.

SOME may read these lines who keep wondering all the time why they ever took up the work they are doing, why they ever came to live where they are living. If they had chosen another way, the whole world would have been different. Let such take heart. To-morrow they may meet the friend whose friendship will be the best blessing of the years, the friend whom they never could have met on any other path. Some are faithfully drudging in poorly requited toil with hardly a hope beyond it. To-morrow they may discover that keen eyes have been watching them, and silently marking their fidelity and patience. They may be suddenly raised beyond their utmost dreams. It is well to cherish no illusions, to go on diligently with the appointed task, making the best of what comes, and with the full resolution not to flinch, though no sudden brightness fall upon the life.

Stones into Pillows.

WE are afraid there are very many who openly or secretly are at war with their circumstances. There are those who have had a choice, and who

believe that they chose wrongly. This must be very bitter. It must be hard to think "Once the door opened: it will never open any more for me. I thought I was in a home, free to go out and to come in, and now I discover that I am in prison, with no escape save in death. The walls are built round me and I cannot scale them." We have known men in remote places who could not help talking of the opportunity they had missed long, long ago: who could not help repining because they refused to avail themselves of it. Perhaps those of us are happier who never have much choice in our lives, who seem at one crisis after another to have only one road at our feet, who have no repinings as to mistaken preferences and misguided elections. But it does not follow that we are where we might wish to be. We had no choice indeed; but if the choice had been ours, we would not have chosen the place in which we are living now, the work which we are dully and wearily performing, the companionships in which we must acquiesce.

But the manly, Christian way out of all this is the way of Jacob. He took the stones of that place and made them into a pillow. He accepted the place as the scene of a heavenly vision. Like the Apostle in the dungeon, the other Apostle in the midst of the Lake of Galilee, Cleopas on the road to Emmaus, John in the isle which is called Patmos—he beheld the vision of God, and he took of the stones of that place and made them a pillow. That is, it is just possible to convert the very disadvantages and hard-

nesses of any place into blessings, into rests for the weary head and heart. How often this has come to pass! The monotony, the loneliness, the great leisure of a lonely island, may turn a happy soul grey. On the other hand, they may be used for study, for labour, for the gradual mastery of some rich domain of thought. A man may go into such a place ignorant and powerless. He may turn himself in such a place into a scholar and a master.

Kindling Faith in Others.

A MAN may find his place barren of spiritual companionship, and if he has come from a warm, believing air, he may be chilled to the very bone by the frost around him. But how if he sets himself through the fire of his own faith to kindle the hearts of others? What is a greater joy than that? What is a greater joy than the joy of imparting light in that manner? He may isolate himself; he may stand apart in a sombre indifference; but he may be wiser. He may set himself to communicate his own life, and that life will blaze up in its turn. So it is that men turn stones into pillows.

A. C. Benson, who is very teachable, has some hard things to learn, for he says: "No one ever gives a thought, except a grateful one, to past suffering. If it leaves its handwriting on brow and cheek, it leaves no shadow on the spirit within. It is so easy to see this in the lives of others, however hard it is to realise it for oneself." Rather, it is true that when night

enters into the human soul it never leaves it, though the stars may rise. And yet our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. For no Christian can think of pain without thinking of heaven. Jacob dreamed on the stony pillow, and saw the ladder reaching to heaven. So Christians dream. "My father's life," said Hazlitt, "was a dream, but it was a dream of infinity and eternity, of death, the resurrection, and judgment to come!" The earthly allotment matters less than we think. At the best we are conscious of ideas that we cannot utter and purposes that we cannot achieve here. It is in another world that the soul within us may hope to dilate and act.

All in Vain.

NOTHING is more natural to us than to hover round the strait gate trying whether we cannot argue it a little wider.

Useful Comparison.

I BELIEVE that a great deal of the mists and shadows of life would be dispelled at once if only we had someone to discuss them with. The grievances of one man would be swept away by the grievances of another

Listen, Brother !

THE first thing to do is to make the best of what you possess, to cultivate a knowledge and a love of your surroundings. Imagine, if you can, that the axis of the earth projects from the centre of your village square.

By taking thought, each may find his home richer in beauty than he had thought it.

It is still more necessary to cultivate a kindly interest in your kind. Kindly gossip is the salt of conversation. It is inhuman to live in the country and to care nothing for the joys and sorrows of your neighbours. People love and prize sympathy more than anything else, and they will forgive much to a sympathetic gossip.

It is necessary to be in contact with a broader life than that of the country parish or the little town. Well, there is always the escape of books. The mind in a quiet and leisurely life must be able to a large extent to feed, not upon itself, but upon its own possessions, and to furnish its own delights. The chief misery of an isolated life is that in many cases it dwarfs and stunts the intellect. It may even kill all intellectual curiosity, and that is death indeed. In order to prevent this, it is wise to carry on a course of reading or study. I know a country gentleman who many years ago took up Egyptology. He has pursued it with great diligence, and has now so good a knowledge of the subject that he is able to meet on fairly equal terms the best experts. It has been a

wonderful thing for him in many ways, chiefly because it has kept the current of his mind clear, and has given him a new interest in life. It has also been the means of winning some valuable friendships. Be it observed that the study would have been comparatively useless if it had been languidly pursued ; but it was carried out with earnest perseverance. I should not greatly pity any friend in his loneliness, if I knew that he had an interest of this kind.

One ought to have certain things to look forward to every day, and the chief thing no doubt will be as a rule the letters. You cannot get good letters unless you write them. Your post will be pretty much what you make it.

Looking Back.

THE road has wound uphill all the way. It has been stony and sore for the feet, but one day it ends in a fountain of refreshment. The lonely months and years are suddenly closed in a sweet and sufficient experience of companionship. The heart that has been kept from love so long finds at last a truer, tenderer love than any that has passed it and missed it in the bygone days. Then the path of tears takes another aspect. It was the path that led to this, and so it was right, it was good, it was blessed. How transforming is the knowledge that one has not been left to stumble uncared for and unheeded, but that the kindly Light was leading, and that the end is not among the dismal swamps, but in the region of peace and rest.

Necessary Effort.

WE must arrange to see our friends as often as we can manage it, and correspondence must not be wholly neglected, even in the years when life is most crowded and burdensome. I have seen strange desolations settling down upon the closing years of life, when friendship is most needed, due to the criminal neglect with which true friends were treated at a time when it seemed as if they could be dispensed with.

Remembering the Best

THERE is a way of training memory so that it shall cast out much at least of what is little and what is unclean. Alas ! when we think of all that memory loses, so much of the flower of thought and wit, so many words, sweet, solemn, and nobly ordered, that have passed away, while they were still ringing in our ears, and when we think of the poor dregs it holds against our will—we may well bemoan ourselves. But the true tragedy is to allow hard experiences to root themselves in our souls.

DELIGHT

"Crowned with the memory and experience of happy years."

Christ in All.

IT has been miserably objected that, even if He was sinless, He did nothing for the intellectual or artistic progress of the world. Well, He did not come to be the drawing-master or the scientific tutor of mankind. His name was called Jesus because He was to save His people from their sins, and He has been, and is to-day, mighty to save—able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Yet art and science and philosophy have received a new life from Him. With the risen Saviour, all things rise.

Love, the Teacher.

THE call of affection, and that only, awakens the soul. No man knows what he can do till he has learned to love. Love blows the trumpet of resurrection over the graves where his faculties are buried, and wakens them into energy and fruitfulness. Love teaches him how he can work, and think, and feel. But in the full sense, we have no friend but our Saviour. He, and He only, touches our natures at every point. Else why the deep craving for sympathy

of which the world is full? Why are the closest ties so sharply sundered? These needs and pangs turn us to Christ.

Joy in Small Things.

LONG ago I read of a Scottish minister who had an ugly little church. The church, however, boasted a beautiful Norman door. The minister took such pride in the door that he came to believe all the building as fair as the entrance, and to consider himself more highly favoured than his brethren in city cathedrals.

DISCIPLINE

"We may beat to windward in poverty. When we no longer go with a fair wind and have to tack constantly against a foul one, we may cease to be spoiled children."

Consecration.

A LOVING parent will not merely save money for his children; he will sanctify himself for their sakes. He will remember that he stands to them as the ideal of goodness and truth; he will realise the awful obligations implied in their pure belief about him; he will remember that he cannot take his own life without taking theirs. What unutterable loss if Christ had even for one moment failed to sanctify Himself!

Following Christ.

THE most absolute self-forgetfulness and self-devotion can hide in a palace as well as in a cottage. The print of the nails may not always be obvious underneath kid gloves and silver slippers, although God sees it is really there. Well for us if He, at least, does see it. But woe unto us if we shrink back and refuse that hard, sharp self-denial, whatever it be, which Christ is pressing home upon our consciences.

The Haunting Call.

WHEN all the interpreters have said their most and best, the Sermon on the Mount keeps looking at us, haunting us, trying us, calling us, stirring our hearts and consciences, summoning us upward and still upward. There are signs that the deeper Christian thought of our time is beginning to think of the old way in which many followed Christ. What if after all He really means that many of us should sell all we have for the treasure and the pearl ?

Rebuffs and Refusals.

GREAT deliverances come to believers when hope is almost dead, when the doors are so many and so fast, and the enemies so strong and so wakeful that it seems as if the way were quite closed. The days when we have been rebuffed in every quarter and know not what further we can do ! The time when it seems as if every effort has been foiled and there is none other we can make ! The day when we catch at the last chance ! When we think of one more succour that may be available, of one heart left in the world that may yet pity—and try—and fail. The day when no answer comes to the last imploring appeal, or an answer which is a cold and cruel refusal ! We are happy if in such an hour we can still trust and wait patiently for the interposition of God.

Looking Forward.

THE future is His, not ours. We have no concern with one day of it.

The times, the seasons, the circumstances—these things should not load us with the lightest burden. Nor are we to be overmuch concerned about outward activities. There be those who make themselves miserable when they do not write a book every year, or when they do not fill up a long calendar of engagements. When it is the will of Christ we must hold ourselves ready to speak, to act, to fight. When it is not, we please Him by retiring into that recollection within the central source of light in which so many were once wisely content to spend their lives. Their activities might be rare, but their force will tell on the universe for ever.

Bread eaten in Tears.

IT is through suffering and renunciations and privation and weariness that all the finer qualities of the soul are evoked. We know the heavenly powers only when we know what it is to have eaten our bread in tears. Sorrow, faithfully and humbly endured, is what makes the soul.

The Call to Rest.

IT may be, and it sometimes is, just as much the work of the Lord to rest as to labour. What is constant is our obligation to abound in the work of

the Lord, to toil and to cease from toiling in His presence, by His strength, under His eye.

In the Lengthening Shadows.

CHRIST would not be taken down from the cross till the evening, and we must not be weary of bearing the cross till the evening of our lives.

Day by Day.

CONTINUANCE in well-doing is a rare and wonderful thing. That a man should continue even in depressing circumstances, to do his very best, year in and year out, shows real decision of character, and invariably makes a deep impression sooner or later. The rule is to live by days, and to do your best in each day. When you waken, you realise that this day is before you, and no more. Get through it well, and the next day will meet you with a more cheerful front. Go on in this way, and at last you will rear a stable edifice wherein you may dwell in peace.

PRAYER

"Some people seem to think that our Blessed Lord left a promise, 'Where two or three thousand are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them.' He did no such thing. He was much too kind. He knew that prayer-meetings were going to be so small."

"*Into Glory Peep.*"

MANY, we are sure, count as among the highest and most luminous hours of life the little prayer-meetings they have attended in humble places in kitchens and barns. It all comes before them so vividly that they are tempted to think that no experiences have been graven so deep as these. They recall the walk to the meeting-place, perhaps on a moonlit night of snow, the long shadows, the "holier day," the hopeful loneliness, the sense that they were on the road to Christ, to a full manifestation of His presence. Thus we come to the low doorway through which love, and grief, and patience, and hope approach Him, and enter the little room where we mark His blest abode, and into glory peep. The little company of grave, subdued worshippers gradually take their places, and one is aware of the deep, still current of thought flowing towards the present Christ, the growing sense of His mastery over us.

Non-moral Prayers.

WE doubt whether there are non-moral prayers. For, as we are always drawn out in tenderness for anyone who we see is looking to us in great expectation and tenderly confiding in us, this must also be true of God.

Books.

IN this department our devotional literature is weak. We have the prayers of Lynch in his *Sermons for my Curates*, and they are the most beautiful we know. We have the prayers of Henry Ward Beecher, and they are remarkable for their wistful tenderness. We have a noble volume of prayers from Dr. Maclaren. But there is that in Dr. Dods' prayers which we do not find elsewhere, and we are convinced that those who study them will be strengthened and calmed and inspired as they see a devout and reverent nature rising into obvious communion with the Father of Spirits. The Master had taught him "how to pray."

The Prayers of Jesus.

THE Church has told us that in hours of high communion the presence of brethren with whom we hold intercourse in articulate speech is not more but less real to the soul than that Infinite Mind Whose language they have heard by inward listening. They cannot tell us more, but they assure

us that they feel One near at hand, within, without, and around, not as an unknown power, but as the central life and light and joy of all. If this is true of the saints, how much more true must it be of Christ! For in His holy soul there was nothing that could misunderstand or oppose the divine revelation. No darkness, no sin, no encrustation barred the way. His whole nature lay open to God, as a river to the shining of the moon. The Gospels bear witness with one voice to His continual intercourse with the Father. They tell us how He went out, when the dawn was scarcely grey, to hold communion with God, how wondrous evenings of miracle were followed by still more wondrous mornings of prayer, how He betook Himself to solitude to converse, which was broken by no word of penitence or doubt. They tell us how, as the weight of His trial grew, He engaged Himself more and more earnestly in prayer, and understood that the Father was husbanding the True Vine.

The Hour of Deep Consent.

PRAYER is at once the easiest and the hardest of spiritual exercises. At the beginning the path is straight and clear. Even then we ask for words, and they are given us. As the soul lifts itself to the Eternal, it craves for the subtle and unsleeping ministry of the Holy Ghost. It seeks an atmosphere in which prayer may utter itself. At last—such is the marvel and mystery of supplication—it seeks that God should

speak to God. It is not satisfied any more with being taught to pray. It asks to be the shrine in which prayer is presented, rather than the priest who pleads. More than the presence of the Son of God praying by our side is the presence of the Holy Spirit praying within. "The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." As Christ stood for us, our substitute in death, so the Holy Spirit stands for us, our substitute in prayer. The heart is quiet in that hour of deep consent—with the peace of the river that has found the sea, of the bird homed in the nest with tired wings folded. It shares the secret of the divine purpose, and is one in every point with the holy and prevailing Will. The redeemed heart moves forward like the first of all days, from the evening to the morning—from the Old Covenant to the New—till it touches, in the intercession of the Holy Ghost within the believer, that moment of intense yearning which signs and crowns the last experience of grace.

Offerer and Answer.

THE unutterable groanings of the Holy Ghost mean that the heart craves for the unutterable. Our desires go forward above every earthly good. Struggle, pain, weariness, darkness—we pass through them knowing they are but for a little time. We are helped in our infirmity by the clasping, supporting hand of the Spirit. But immunity from sorrow will not suffice us. Our Divine Friend has prayed for

us the unutterable prayer and stirred within us the unspeakable desire, and the finite seeks the Infinite. The meaning of our true end comes breaking through the years. The believing heart even now plunges into the depths of the Divine, where the reason cannot follow. As God is the Offerer of Prayer, so must God be the Answer to Prayer.

The First Duty.

IT is not the will of Christ that we should depend merely on the hope of the future. It is not His will that any part of life should be a blank space—an uncomforted stretch of desert through which we march to the Promised Land. The remedy for care is to realise the love of God in Christ moment by moment, touching all existence, and glorifying it—if we will—with peace and joy. That can only be if we abide in Him by that continual exercise of prayer which to Christians must more and more appear the supremely reasonable thing in the business of existence.

The Return of Spring.

"IN the midst of the years make known" is a prayer not for a change of surroundings, but for lordship over them. And this mastery comes to us only in one way. God in Christ must disclose Himself. We must return to the Lord, and receive from Him the deep and vital power we have lost.

More than the vanished splendour of the heavenly

vision which quickened our youth comes back to us, and with it the spring returns.

By this revival we are brought into tune with circumstance. We cease to be rebellious, or chilled, or even resigned. We mourn no more that we have so little, can do so little. We enter into a deep and settled reconciliation with our surroundings, and so life becomes at last harmonious, and strong, and precious. So precious, as we think of the past and the future, that the prayer is last on our lips as we fall asleep, first in our thoughts as we awake with God —In the midst of the years make known. "Christ, gather up my life's poor hoard!"

In Agony and Loneliness.

OUR hope, our only hope from first to last, is in the retentiveness of the divine love—in Christ's resolute hold. "We will come unto him and make our abode with him," is a promise great enough to meet the last extremity of our need, to encounter the most formidable enmity of circumstances. Our Lord has not forgotten how, as He moved towards the Father, He had at last to leave behind Him all human companionship. "Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder." It may come to each of us to have at last to "pray yonder." And that is the ultimate experience of life. Thence we may come back to the world and to our task, assured that we are safe, knowing that it is towards Christ that our deepest thought and will and love have been tending all the while.

Prayer and its Answer.

HOW shall we pass from these nights into mornings? By prayer. The humble and lonely and feeble supplication, in which we seem to speak to iron and unreplying heavens—that prayer will speed. The answer may come late, but it may come. It may come to the soldier wounded, bleeding, and dying; but, when it comes, his peace will be like a river and his righteousness as the waves of the sea.

By abiding under the Cross and entering into the fellowship of the Saviour's sufferings. It is as we hear the pleadings and the groanings of the eternal High Priest that we are delivered and made conformable to His death.

By working and waiting. "Play the man," was the word that came to a sorely tried spirit. It is as we persevere without illumination in the discharge of duty that we gradually discover how, in spite of all we have lost for the time, a deep support remains. While working and waiting, we are to watch for the light which is surely coming, for the fulfilment of that which is written, "While quiet silence contained all things, and the night was in the midway of her course, Thy omnipotent Word sallied out of heaven from the royal seats."

In the School of Christ.

STUDY and prayer must go on together. Many pray who are content with the teaching they have received, and never seek to enlarge or deepen it.

Many study in absolute neglect of the means by which alone Christian knowledge can burst in upon the soul. Both are ignorant that the Holy Spirit teaches now and immediately every loyal, prayerful student in the school of Christ.

"*Pray without Ceasing.*"

WE complain of the decline in candidates for the ministry, and remedies are suggested. But I have not seen it stated that Christ faced the same difficulty, and met it in His own way. Said He, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." There is a decline of candidates for the ministry. What then? "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." What would be thought if you had a week of prayer-meetings to plead with God on this subject? Would anyone attend? More than you think would attend. More will be done in that way than by giving better salaries and better education. But prayer is no easy thing; prevailing prayer. We must waken the Lord. For this He will be inquired of. He says, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days." Nor will He awake at once. He will refuse till we ask Him more earnestly. He says, "Let me go," that we may answer, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." He says, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs," that we may

reply, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

> "Oh! how strangely Thou eludest
> Those, dear Lord, that have believed!
> Yet, eluding, ne'er deludest,
> Nor deceiv'st, nor art deceived!"

We must waken God before we waken the dim sunken masses. What Savonarola cried in the crisis of his Church I would repeat, "Wake Christ! Wake Christ!"

Lumsden of Aberdeen.

HE studied his students closely, and delighted to mark and elicit any sign of promise in them. He would occasionally, but rarely, show his pleasure by signs of affection, but we came to understand him best by his prayers. I have never heard any prayers which moved me so much, never any so full of fervour, of humility, of reverence. You saw then that, what the man taught, he believed humbly, passionately, completely. What a joy and strength it would be to hear him pray again!

Books to be Written.

I DO not know in the English language a single great or complete book on prayer, a book dealing frankly with the teaching of Scripture. Nor do I know any work in which the significance of forgiveness is at all adequately discussed.

The Shield of Prayer.

TO keep the Fair Deposit, to bring the precious treasure to Jerusalem, means hard fighting, constant watching. The power of evil is always eminent in the midst of us. Against it religion finds that all her efforts have to be kept in perpetual strain. There is the tyranny of the visible, and there is the slowness of our hearts to believe in the unseen.

Though it is true that the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, while they that do the will of God abide for ever, yet it is the world that seems often real and stable, and the saints before the Throne invisible or dim.

We hope we are wrong, but it seems to us that many Christians imagine that they can keep the faith of childhood while neglecting those opportunities of converse with God that must be used, if the spiritual life is not to wither away.

No really great theologian, no really great believer, has ever lived, to whom prayer was not infinitely more important than any mere exercise of the intellect.

Pray Once More.

I SHOULD like, for my part, to see great public meetings of Free Churchmen held, not for the purpose of passing resolutions, but of offering prayer. I do not understand why any prayer-meeting should cease or die so long as there are two or three to join in pleading. It is to two or three that the promise

is given. But it is our own particular and individual duty that we must think of, and so I say, give Him no rest. You seek conversions in your own classes, in your meetings, in your visitations—give Him no rest. Plead the needs of souls, plead your own helplessness, plead your own misery, plead your own defeat, plead the Precious Blood, plead the Five Wounds, which are the fortresses of our love, plead the promise of the Holy Ghost ; give Him no rest.

Christ's Prayer for us.

MANY of us had once those who prayed for us, who remembered us before the Throne. What a joy and strength it was to know it ! But perhaps those who prayed for you have been long since gathered to their rest. Perhaps you are not sure that anyone in all the world prays now for you by name. But, blessed be God, the great Intercessor never pauses. One sweet, clear, prevailing voice is heard before the Throne, and when we do not pray for ourselves, and when no fellow-being prays for us, Christ does not forget to pray.

HYMNS

"Always, on taking up a new hymnal, I look first to see whether the hymn 'Rock of Ages' is included or not."

A Glorious Beginning.

"Little travellers Zionward,
Each one entering into rest."

The two stanzas seem to me to make the finest opening of a child's hymn in existence.

Scott's Hymn.

A CORRESPONDENT of *The Scotsman* put the reasonable question why Sir Walter Scott's "When Israel, of the Lord beloved" was not included in the Scottish Hymnal, whereto A. K. H. B., who, it seems, was the editor of that work, replied with adorable frankness that the lines were not up to the mark of the Scottish Hymnal, being lumbering and ungraceful. There has been nothing equal to this since the editor of a Greenock newspaper declined Campbell's "On Linden when the sun was low." The story goes that he inserted in his notices to correspondents something like this: "T. C. Your lines 'On Linden when the sun was low' are not up to our mark. Try again."

Most readers of poetry will place these lines of Scott among their three favourite pieces of that author. For companions I name :

> " There is mist on the mountain and night on the brae,
> But the clan has a name that is nameless by day,
> Then gather, gather, gather Glengarach ; "

and the wonderful lines :

> " Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
> At the daybreak from the fallow :
> And the bittern sound his drum,
> Booming from the sedgy shallow."

Music.

FOR passion I turn to Paxton Hood's little hymn-book, and read the exquisite lines :

> " How sweet the child rests,
> Whom nothing molests,
> Received in mercy among the Lamb's guests ! "

Are there more musical words than these in our English tongue ? I do not forget the Laureate's favourite among his own numbers :

> " By the long wash of Australasian seas."

or Thomson's consummate :

> " And Mecca saddens at the long delay."

Dr. Horatius Bonar.

I

THE literary productions he thought least of were by far the most popular. These hymns were ushered into the world in the most unpretending

manner. Some of them were printed as leaflets, to be sung by the Sunday-school scholars in Kelso; others were used to fill up vacant spaces in *The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*. He wrote some of the best-known in railway carriages, and some when sitting for a brief rest by the fireside after a day's work. They have gone round the world, have been sung in churches of all communions, have been learned by little children, and hung as lights over the thickly closing waters of death.

II

EVEN the brightness of his verses has something sombre in it, like the red flashing of a November sky. In a world where death and change will not suffer us to love in peace, and where the most faithful workers often sow in tears, such strains will always be caught up hungrily.

SAINTS

"Many, alas! have never known a saint, save through books. "But in truth the saints are still to be found; and found often in the lowest spheres. The man is to be deeply pitied who has never known a great saint."

Paul.

I

TO the eye of the world his career ended in desertion, failure, collapse. But as the old man was led along the Ostian Way to die, his mother Jerusalem bent over him with rapturous welcome. He saw those who had gone before, the martyrs in their robes of crimson and the saints in white. Life behind him was like a far-off storm at sea. He was filled with a sense of everlasting triumph as he neared the high world he had longed to dwell in, that world whose air was home. The city of God is glad, and her gladness transfigured him. He saw the earthly vanish and himself entering into the fellowship whereof all the love we know is but a trembling shadow, that city where all we love is restored. To the eye of sense, his career ended as forlornly and lovelessly as might be. To the eye of faith, his death was the rising of his mother, to take her wearied child to her breast.

II

THAT this grand and passionate nature should be turned into a loving, working, quiet power; that through the years he did not yield to dismay or bitterness; was not tempted by base compliances; was not elated by passing victories; that, having done all, he stood—such was the triumph of St. Paul. It is the triumph of all saints. We glory most not in their brilliant and victorious hours, but in their steadfast perseverance through light and shadow to the end. Remembering that, we bless God "for their faith, their hope, their labour, their truth, their blood, their zeal, their diligence, their tears, their purity, their beauty."

Duty without Pride.

WE may surely adapt words used long ago of another, to General Gordon. He was one who lived his life, who passed through sorrow without bitterness, who did his duty without pride, who hoped without conceit of favour, who heard the voice of God saying, "This is the way." But the saints do not need our compliments.

Wesley and Bonar.

MAY we not come to be above law, above plans, and above rules, and bring forth fruit naturally and unconsciously and in due season? In other

words, may we not cease from our own works, as God did from His, and as Christ did from His, when He fell asleep on the cross?

I think that there is much in the recorded experience of believers which encourages this hope. Was it not true of John Wesley that for many years he abode in this Sabbath of the Son? As I read his *Journals*, and especially the later volumes, I seem to see that he was not any longer a worker, but simply a fruit-bearer. From all his many journeys he carried and wore the white rose of rest. Nothing irked him, nothing disturbed him; he was at peace. Even here he had entered the Sabbath Rest that remaineth for the people of God. And I may venture to say that Dr. Andrew Bonar, both in his life and in his printed words, left on my mind the same impression. He was dead to the solicitations, and even to the weariness, of the flesh. He had ceased from his own works, and men gazed on him and marvelled at the fruit-bearing Tree of God.

Dr. Pusey.

WHAT remains to us, and it is much, is the memory of a saint. When the wood, hay, and stubble are burned up, sainthood and the supernatural truth and grace which alone could produce it or account for it will survive. Much has been said of the imperfect literary form of Dr. Pusey's work—too much, for is it so certain that literary form is necessary to immortality? But reading with

his eyes, we always see Eternity looking through Time. This will keep his comments on Holy Scripture alive when the work of far better critics and scholars is forgotten. There was such an ardour for goodness, for pity, for self-sacrifice in Dr. Pusey that every just and humble soul must see in him "one of those to whom, under ruder or purer form, the Divine Idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself; and shine through . . . in unspeakable Awfulness, unspeakable Beauty, in their souls; who therefore are rightly accounted Prophets."

In Our Street.

THE sweet odours of their life may lie quiet and still till, on some day of storm, the flower-bells in God's garden are shaken and their fragrance flows forth. Then is known the faith that can live through any trial and be brave through any death. Sometimes in a little hamlet, sometimes in a great city, some dear head is laid in the dust, and all the people gather round, weeping. Sometimes there are only one or two to mourn, but these know that the aspect of life and death has been changed for them, and that the personal presence of Christ with a soul is no delusion, no dream.

The Beloved Son.

WHO of the saints delighted in the law of the Lord as did the Saint of Saints? It was of Him alone that it could be said that He was utterly

obedient. Moment by moment, day and night, His soul stood by its arms. He slept, but His heart wakened. He looked into the Old Testament and saw His own image, as the stars might see theirs in a glassy lake.

The Saints' Witness.

WHEN the saints speak, they always say that the hiding-place of their life is Christ. They will tell you that they knew Christ on the cross as their sacrifice; that they knew Him next as their loving Friend; that, last of all, they knew the mystery of union with Him.

The Religion of Redemption.

CHRISTIANITY begins with the regeneration of the individual, and has no belief in any regeneration of society apart from that.

Christianity is either a religion of redemption or a dead and powerless nothing.

SIN AND SALVATION

"A democracy without religion is the most awful vision of the future. Nothing can save such a society from perishing in a Lake of Fire."

"Men know God irrevocably, if they know Him at all, in the Cross of Jesus Christ. The common people still hear gladly one Voice, only, . . . the Voice that was softly lifted up in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago."

1. THE ATONEMENT

Explaining and Understanding.

THE desire to explain the Atonement may go too far. All help is welcome, but the fact itself is much more easily understood than many explanations of it. Its "Onlyness" is the main thing.

The Full Oblation.

WE admit that some who are puzzled as to certain intellectual aspects of the Atonement do nevertheless receive it, and that the evangelical love for Christ burns on almost unchecked at the centre of their thought. But it is the grasp of the full oblation, sacrifice, and substitution on the cross, which creates that intense and personal love for the Redeemer which is the essence and the core of faith.

His Atoning Death.

WHENEVER the heart is most kindled it is by the thought of the well of God dug by the soldiers' spear, of the cross, the sponge, the vinegar, the nails, of the red wine of love that flowed when He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him ; of the sweet and dreadful cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? "

He was slain, and we slew Him. We can never make it up. The thorns of the thorn-crowned head pierced the heart, the fever of His death wakes the fever of our passion, till all the loves that once strayed abroad gather to a burning centre, and the fountain of our affections has but one channel, and that is He.

The Mystery of Redemption.

THE offering of the Lord Jesus will be comprehended by the saints more fully as the years advance. Since the awful day on which He died, it has opened before each generation new abysses of significance.

The One Thing Needful.

RELIGIOUS teachers may say they do not understand the Atonement ; but their hearers understand it well enough, and give God thanks.

Preachers may speak of aspirings and followings after the ideal, while they keep a vow of more than Trappist severity of spiritual silence towards the Son of God ; but their hearers will not surrender the

present love of Christ, the one abiding good that has come to them through the frustrated and broken years.

Two Vast Words.

A DEEP religion concerns itself mainly with the two vast words "Sin and Grace."

2. THE BURDEN OF SIN

Free Grace.

MORE and more, as life unfolds itself to you, you will know that your primary need is to be loosed from your sins, loosed from the past sins which follow you, trouble you, haunt you, wear you out, loosed from the nature that ever bends you towards sin, which finds temptations so fierce, so irresistible. This is what the Supreme Love has done for as many as have received Him. He loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own Blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.

So it comes to pass that the characteristic word of Christianity is "grace," as the characteristic word of Buddhism is "Karma." Grace is the bending love and the stooping pity which looses us from our past, which delivers us from our burden and our weakness.

"*We Wrestle.*"

NO conviction is burned more deeply into the inner heart of the world than this, that sin is not done with us when we have done with sin. There

are men and women by the hundred thousand who would gladly give all they possess if they could but lay their hands upon one hour of madness, and pluck it from the past.

The Dark Soul.

CHRISTIANITY, of all religions, is the only one which has a message to the man who has become a beast. It speaks to him and sets before him the loftiest ideal, as not too high for his striving. Once the window is opened in the dark soul, through which God is seen in Christ, a beginning is made which ends in coronation.

Christianity transforms the root of the soul, blots out past transgression, and brings to bear the fostering powers of the world to come, in hastening the consummate flower.

Christ our Ransom and Recall.

WRITERS like Dr. Harnack and Dr. Davidson do not recognise the sense of guilt. They speak as if we had no relation to our past. But in the deep heart of man the sense of guilt is permanent, not destroyed by time, or culture, or the enlargement of vision, or even by the apparent deadness and oppression of the spiritual nature. "It has us, and not we it It pursues us flying, and holds us rebelling." It is in Christ, our Ransom and Recall, that the soul finds all it craves for : pardon, rest, power. How wonderful

it is to pass from the chill and darkness of this story of a dying faith to the magical sun-soaked air of the New Testament !

The Call.

THE injunction of the Gospel is not Love, nor even Pray ; it is Repent and Believe.

3. COMING TO CHRIST

Here and Now.

" PLEASE God," said an old Irishwoman in New York, " we'll have easy times when Tillden's elected." This is how we speak. When some party comes into power, when some new legislation is enacted, when some tangled problem is solved, there will be for us a new heaven and a new earth. But now is the day of salvation. Here, at this moment, any soul looking to Christ, and trusting in Christ, may receive the Bread that God the Father has sealed, and be satisfied. Every soul may take that peace which the world cannot give and cannot take away.

The Glory to be Revealed.

TRUST Him. Try Him. To those who keep away from Him He is like the stained windows of a great cathedral seen from the outside. There is no beauty to be discerned or desired. But come into the cathedral, and lift up your eyes and witness all

around you the miracle and splendour of fire. You know the glory which the passer-by can never conceive. This knowledge, I believe, has been granted to very many among you, and it is a knowledge that will grow, just in proportion as you use it.

How Differently !

IS not the coming of the soul to Christ a meeting of souls ? The sinful soul rises ; the sinless descends. Thus does the Son of Man become the Saviour. And is it not by a movement of faith that we enter the Door ? Faith, we have sometimes thought, is the door-latch ; and how many have believed, and how differently they have believed, and how sweetly they have entered into rest !

Friend of Friends.

PERHAPS the day of days in life is when we discover the Unseen Friend at our side on the way to Jerusalem. Some of us are much clearer on that day than on the day of our conversion.

Taking Refuge.

BUNYAN tells us how the conviction possessed him, " I must go to Jesus." It is this going to Jesus which is the beginning of salvation.

4. KEPT IN THE FAITH

Redeemed and Restored.

THE apostles never, so far as we can remember, try to deepen the sense of indwelling corruption in their converts. They never once fasten on them names of humiliation.

Even when they sin, the way to recovery is to remember that their roots have pierced through to the living water, that their life is hid with Christ in God. Our danger is rather that we shrink faithlessly from the language which it becomes the redeemed of the Lord to use, and which they can only use as they are clothed in the robe of His righteousness, and looking to His cross. For in looking to the cross, we do not lose sight of our sin. It is graven there. But if we look at our sins we may lose sight of Christ, for His image is not in them. "It is not in our own wounds," says Vinet, "but in the wounds of Jesus that we must put our hands."

Christian Example.

THE great token and witness of Christ on earth is the life kindled by Him in the beginning and burning on steadily to the end. Perhaps none of us know what such lives have been and are to us; how our faith and hope hang on them. They always burn on the altar of Christ's death, and may we not say on an altar of their own self-sacrifice? The innocent secret kept simply and bravely through the

years often comes out at death. It turns out that the life silently and cheerfully embraced, the work pursued with unfailing zest and courage, were the last that Nature would have chosen. But they were joyfully accepted as from Christ, and on the altar the fire burned brighter and brighter.

The Victorious Christian.

IT is good to die to the world, good to have the fierce fires of pride subdued, good to cease from all secular ambition ; but only if there is a resurrection from death to life, and if the Holy Spirit fills us when we rise again. By tribulation our life is healed of its rebellion ; but that is not enough. The goal is to be able to say with St. Paul, " None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself." The fear that once turned one's heart into a handful of dust is gone ; but that is not enough. We must be able to say—and perhaps this is the last word that can be said—" I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The mind of Christ has taken possession so utterly that it is hardly possible to distinguish between it and the nature and operations of what we used to call our own minds. Then comes the uplift of the soul, its abode in the second rest, its zeal, its self-forgetfulness, its conscious life in God, its peace like a river, its righteousness like the waves of the sea. Yet of those who have attained that stillness, it may be said that though now they be quiet, they have done business in great

waters, "seen the white teeth of the storm furies and sailed through the very throat of death."

Saved by Grace.

OFTEN, when men taunt us with the charge that our lives have been failures, that our efforts have come to nothing, we may feel that we have not much to say. Indeed, it often seems as if it were so. We have hardly gathered one rose from the wilderness—one token of the coming joy and bloom. But, after all, the true evidence of success is inward, not outward. It is written on the deepest part of the soul by the finger of God. It is like the seal of the Spirit set on these dim, infirm, half-blinded natures, —the pledge that they shall be conformed at last to the image of the Son.

The Power of the Spirit.

IN many of us faith is very dim, though not quite quenched. Something has been kept, but it is very little; enough for bare existence, not enough for happiness or for power. It may be nearly lost altogether, in the study of grammars and dictionaries and books of criticism, in the bitter discussion of ecclesiastical affairs, even in much serving and skilful organising. What right have we to think we can keep it, if we do not live in communion with God, His Word, and His saints? What right have we to think that we can keep it, if the heart is suffered to become a

high road, trampled by the cares of this life, by the ambitions of time, by the passion for intellectual distinction? The saddest thing in all the world is to see the young men, who once were all aflame for God, faint and grow weary, perchance utterly fall. Of how many it has to be said in these days that they once burned and shone, and, in the end, grew cold! But through the Holy Ghost it is possible to keep the faith, to end in more than the passion of youth, to die testifying, and not, as Voltaire reports of Cavalier, "much failed of his first enthusiasm."

"*With a Full Heart, silently.*"

TO trust Christ is not merely to believe with the intellect the truth about Him, but to commit our hearts to His keeping.

MYSTICS AND MYSTICISM

The Mystic Yearning *

"Now I hear it not, but loiter
Gaily as before.
Yet sometimes I think, and thinking
Makes the heart so sore—
Just a few steps more
And there might have dawned for me
Blue and infinite, the sea."

Powerful through Detachment.

WE have heard much of late about the practical mystic, and the mystic is great and powerful in practical affairs for various reasons, and not least for this, that he never stakes his all.

The Mystic.

HE believes intensely that more and more light is ever breaking from the Word. He believes that it should never be opened save by hands that tremble with reverence. He receives it into his arms as the aged Simeon received the Holy Child. He goes on to study it wistfully, hopefully, till death, or the Lamb of God loses the seals of the Book.

The Second Sense.

IN the view of the mystic, great divine words are not the prize of the toiling intellect of mortality ; they are the gift of the Eternal Love. What concerns

* Favourite lines.

him is not what the human authors who were the organs of the revelation more or less dimly conceive to be its meaning. He goes behind all that to the intention of the Holy Spirit. This the reader may find more truly than the original writer. This idea is most familiar in the literature of mysticism. Thus St. Martin came to see that there were greater depths in his Ecce Homo than he was aware of until he was acquainted with the writings of Jacob Boehme. The author of *John Inglesant*, a good mystic of the second order, read a sermon preached on the meaning of one of his minor books. He wrote to the preacher that his meaning was different; but he afterwards wrote that he now saw that the preacher's meaning was the true meaning. All mystics believe that beyond the obvious sense of the Scripture there is often a second sense.

Mystical Holy Church.

IT is one of the chief alleviations of the sorrow of earthly disunion that we may ever and anon come to the surprised and joyful consciousness that the brother who is bearing another name and is fighting in another army is, in reality, at one with us in the Mystical Holy Church. Those who seem spectral and far off, if not positively alien and hostile, are discerned as the true brothers of our hearts. Wherefore it is the wont of mystics to claim this friendship, and to exact recognition "in all houses, temples, and tarrying places of the fraternity." In the fellowship

of the Holy Assembly is peace. There we escape the boundless weariness of the spirit of the world. There we may win and wear that Rose, which is the symbol of the joy of the two Jerusalems.

An Authority.

WHAT was the use of talking about mysticism to a man who, in almost the first thing he published, had discussed the relations between Clement and Dionysius and the French Quietists? Dr. Dods was familiar with the doctrines of Ammonius Saccas, and could lay his finger on the weaknesses of Kingsley, and mark the limits of R. A. Vaughan. How did he come to be so wise? By the long labours of a life-time. The late High Master of St. Paul's School used to say, "Give four hours a day to any subject, and you will find by the time you are getting to forty that you are the chief authority on it."

A Book to Cherish.

MISS UNDERHILL has given us, on the whole, the best English work on Mysticism.

Charles H. Spurgeon.

READ him when he enters the spiritual region, and you feel that you are with one of the great mystics of the world.

Breathless Realities.

THE Bible is not anywhere to us what it was twenty years ago. Passages we then passed over as meaningless now take hold of us as with living hands. One may doubt whether the highest spiritual truth will ever go into words. The most poetical region of all, says a living mystic, is that which is incapable of taking the form of poetry. The realities take away the breath that would, if it could, give them forth in song. Some things are impossible to utter, and other things it is unlawful to utter. Over such truths the spirit wanders, brooding, till it becomes vocal, and that is the utterance we have from mystics.

Mystic Faith.

MANY humble believers, nourished with the sincere milk of the Word, mighty in the Scriptures, have been unconsciously great theologians, though often so hard pressed that they could only say, in the words over the grave of Heinrich Jung Stilling at Carlsruhe: "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

The Scottish Mystic.

IT is not so difficult to define mysticism in Scotland. The Christian mystic is "far ben."

A Sign of the Mystic.

NOTHING is more strange and affecting, and yet nothing is more true, than that those who take the most vehement part in the conflicts of this world and the keenest interest in its affairs are nevertheless detached from it. They are all the while sons of the high mother city which is free. It is this which makes them magnanimous, patient, resolute; it is this which makes them willing to leave the struggle before victory is proclaimed, and even when it seems as if the infantry of trust were being repulsed. They have achieved a great liberty. While they live they dwell with God; when they die they depart in peace, because their eyes have seen His salvation.

Prayers Perpetual Made and Answered.

IT is by the strengthening of the bond with God, and by earnest supplication, that the den of thieves within us is at last changed into the house of prayer. When that is done, the mystic, by the fact of his conviction, is sure of his life entering more and more into the world where petition is ever fulfilling itself. Answers to prayer stand continually round him, and that much more closely than the hills around Jerusalem.

One in Christ.

AMONG the few precious scraps which Dr. Parker kept in his great Bible was a cheque from Father Stanton in aid of one of his City Temple

missions. Dr. Parker had paid the money and kept the cheque as a precious treasure. When Dr. Parker was dying, his mind turned to his friend, and he said, "Father Stanton is praying for me." We have no desire to attenuate in any manner the grave and serious differences which separated the school of the one preacher from the school of the other, and yet who that knew them both can fail to say with a joyous confidence that they were one in Christ Jesus?

An Achievement.

FEW things give me more satisfaction than the reflection that I got Martensen's book on Jacob Boehme translated for English readers.

Andrew Jukes.

WE have seen a two-line paragraph announcing the death of the Rev. Andrew Jukes, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. It came as a surprise to us, for we thought that Mr. Jukes had passed from earth and time long ago. Indeed, he never seemed much to belong to them, and all we know of his outward career is that for a long time he preached to a congregation in Hull. His writings, however, survive him, and they will live, for they are the work of a true and original mystic and a deep student of Holy Scripture. There are signs that the higher criticism itself is beginning to discern that there are other modes of approach to the Bible than the critical mode; that Christian criticism itself, followed out wisely, justifies

much which in the past it condemned. Mr. Jukes was nothing of a critic. He was a student and a believer, but his books on the Pentateuch, on the Gospels, and on the *Restitution of All Things*, whether their conclusions be accepted or not, will remain a possession of the Church, for the writer was a seer. He did not think it needful to march round the tabernacle guarding it from foes. It was a good work, but not his work. Nor did he remain between the porch and the altar seeking wistfully for a gleam of the hidden glory. He was of those who had found an entrance into the holiest of all.

The Author of "Robert Falconer."

THERE is no difficulty in discovering our author's spiritual whereabouts. He is a mystic in the fullest sense. He apprehends God in Christ by direct vision, and thereafter his longing is not to grasp and possess, but more and more to be grasped and possessed.

The Pure of Heart.

AFTER all, one thing, and only one, is needful. How have you been led in life? Who are the people who have most profoundly influenced you? For whom has your reverence been deepest, most bending? They have not been, I venture to say, the clever, the brilliant, the accomplished. They have been the wise—wise with a wisdom that cometh only from the Lord, and only to the children of the kingdom. It is they who are always right, who

always seem to know what we should do, who enter the sheepfold by the door, while others climb up their own way. They do not reach their end through long and toilsome reasonings. They have the power of strange, straight vision, which sees right through all mystery and bewilderment to truth as it really is. They are children to the last, whether they be old or young.

THE HAPPY POSTURE

" Accept the will of God, and all the bitterness goes."

On Acceptance.

IN every profession there are comparatively few whose early dreams come to fulfilment. The vast majority have to content themselves with humble aims, slow advancement, an uninteresting career, and a nameless memory. We can bear but little success, and little is given to us, and the day comes but too early when we know that the ascent of life has ceased, and that henceforth we must decrease.

Such defeat, if trustfully accepted, brings its own peace. There is an end of the long, lonely misgivings, of the ambition which has drawn such hard breath under the weight of self-distrust. If we will but cease ! Few things are more tragical and forlorn than attempts made to recall the irrevocable—to pretend to a youth that is past—to make vain appeals against an irreversible judgment. It is well to struggle on while hope remains. But let us be wise as we grow older, and accept the award.

" Thy Will be Done."

HE did not merely accept the will of God when it was brought to Him and laid upon Him. Rather He went out to meet that loving will, and fell upon its neck and kissed it.

Power in Ourselves

NOT in surroundings, but in ourselves, is the true power over nature to be found. By faith we understand that to those in union with the will of God sorrow and frustration may be but other names for joy and triumph. So we say, " If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that," not as shirkers, not as fearful, not as unbelieving, but as those who are safe, as those who know that all things are well if they put us on the way to God. . . . Let us ask God so to order the great and manifold and terrible changes of life, that they may bring us nearer to Him and to Home.

Full of Faith.

THERE is peace of God which passeth understanding. There is none that may not know it—that strange buoyancy, that inexplicable tranquillity, that daring hope ; in the midst of anguish, tumult and wreck. It comes to those who gaze on the amazing continent of things unseen—who are the children of God by faith.

III. PREACHERS AND PREACHING

THE CHURCH

"Men return again and again to the few who have mastered the spiritual secret, whose life has been hid with Christ in God. These are of the same religion."

1. INVISIBLE

Pilgrims of Eternity.

IT is our happiness, in this land, to begin our journey to God in the name of Christ, to start from the prayers of childhood; but there are pilgrims of eternity whose start is more distant from the goal, and they care for their souls, and their souls are cared for, though they do not name the Name that is above every name.

On Roman Catholics.

THAT true believers, who have no other means of instruction than those afforded in the Church of Rome, are to be found in that communion, can be denied only by the most crazy bigots, and wherever the fruits of the Spirit are, there is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit is, there is still the Church.

The Noble and Perplexed.

TEACHING that will influence men now must be open-eyed, and brave, ready to modify what should be modified, and surrender what should be

surrendered. But it must be the teaching in which the heart of the Church of Christ pours itself out. "When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father. We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge. We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood." We do not forget that there may be some cases in which there is perplexity as to words when there is no wandering of the heart, and that noble spirits who could not express themselves so, have been not far from the kingdom of God, nay, rather in its deepest bosom.

2. VISIBLE

The Only Dread

OUR only fear for Nonconformity in this country is that it may gradually lose its hold on the supernatural, clinging at first to fragments, and then rejecting these.

Its Charm and Glory.

NONCONFORMITY is a perpetual discipline of faith in the supernatural. This to many of us is its chief charm.

Honoured Already.

MOST certainly no one can confer any honour on Nonconformity.

The Child in the Pew.

IT is the thoughts of childhood that are the long, long thoughts, and it is in the sanctuary, and only in the sanctuary, that they can fully learn the message of the Eternal Love.

Broken Up.

ONE often wonders why the Broad Church has perished in England, and why the High Churchmen have prospered so exceedingly. The Broad Church perished simply because it ceased to be a Church.

Foes.

THE worst enemies of the old Evangelicalism are those who do not argue, but rebuke, denounce, calumniate, who identify the essential with the non-essential, who cherish the spirit of hate and vengeance. Christ and His Gospel are not served in this fashion. All the windows of the redeemed soul must be kept open to every breath that blows from heaven.

The Best Way.

I SHOULD wish Disestablishment to come not as a triumph of one church or part over another. I should like that we should understand each other better, and ripen towards a mutual agreement.

The Unity of the Churchyard.

THE enthusiasm of many good men for amalgamating all our denominations, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and the rest, puzzles me. The day will come when a truly catholic creed will be wrought out, and then will the true unity of life be achieved. But if convictions are laid aside for the sake of union, we have not the unity of the Church, but the unity of the churchyard.

On Counting Souls.

THE revival of interest in missions is an object on which many Christian hearts are most lawfully set. But let no one fancy that the Church will be lashed into missionary zeal by statistics. Calculations go a very small way in the kingdom of grace, and even if evangelical arithmeticians knew more than they do, hearts are not set on fire by figures.

Impracticable Men.

WHAT would become of the churches if it were not for impracticable men? They are actually saved by such. Men who cannot be "managed" or got round, who insist on speaking when the prudent fathers pray for silence, who fear no abuse and covet no preferment, who conceive deep purposes, and, at the risk of overturning the official coach, carry them through to the end. They appear in organisations when corruption is nearing

the core, and the death-rot is at hand, to apply the healing knife.

Church Union.

TRUE union between the churches can only come from fresh discoveries of the way and power of faith. The churches must be fellow-students of the divine relation, and while they are, there should be between them the most perfect and cordial charity. As preventing this, Establishment is a great evil, and must be removed before any effective step towards union can be taken, partly because its existence prevents the Free Churches from frankly and properly discussing and settling their own problems, partly because the church established is hindered by privilege from taking a sisterly part in the common counsel-taking.

The Churches of the Poor.

IT may be doubted whether the poorer classes will ever be won by ordinary church methods. The great successes among the poor are in the Wesleyan Methodist mission-halls and in Baptist Tabernacles. The poor attend a hall much more readily than a Gothic church. They will not come where seats are not free. They prefer a great building to a small building. They love a bright, hearty service, but in the end they will not long go anywhere unless the preaching is strong, sympathetic, and Christian. The churches may very well consider if it is worth while,

except in well-to-do neighbourhoods, to build churches and chapels of small size. Among the poor the work will not be done in this way.

Shadow and Light.

THE internal strife in the Church increases. Not only is there the battle that must be with us till it is decided ; but Churchmen fight with Churchmen ; Nonconformists with Nonconformists. The wisdom and beauty of tolerance are recognised less and less, and while the awful shadow lies on all the churches, their energies are mostly consumed in waging civil war. Yet the Church of Christ is one, and will yet be aware of its unity. Meanwhile we come to wrong conclusions about each other ; we utterly misconstrue and lose one another.

Little Chapels.

NOTHING puzzles us more than the agony with which the maintenance of little churches is regarded by many religious minds. You will never hear a testimony against the waste that goes on in other directions. The luxury of the rich—who has anything to say about that ? The extravagance and meanness of many professing Christians—who ventures to denounce them ? But that there should be two chapels in a place where one might suffice seems to wring the very heart of reunionists. Is the evil done so terrible ? What harm have those chapels done ? Is the presence of another Gospel minister

in a little community so unmitigated and black a curse? May it not be that the vindication of many labourers in such places will come through Christ Himself, on Whom they have wrought a good work?

The Dissenter's Heritage.

IN literature, in politics, in every field, we occupy a greater and greater place. Have you considered that all the recent pictures of religious life which have carried the country by storm are pictures of Dissent? Have you considered that among the younger leaders in literature nearly all the most prominent are more or less closely allied with us? Those who think that our political influence has diminished, should look back to the day when there was in Parliament but one representative of Dissent. Our business is to claim our heritage boldly, hopefully, with ceaseless energy and unflinching resolution, to claim it in the spirit of those who have believed the assurance, "All things are yours," and to whom in poverty, and obscurity, and limitation have been given Paul and Apollos and Cephas, and life and death, and the present and future, and Christ and God.

Charles Stanford: a Great Dissenter.

WAS there a more truly heroic life than this? Take the most sensitive of natures, house it in the most delicate of frames. Fill it with a passion (of all things) for the Dissenting ministry. Multiply trials at home till everything but love is out

at the window, while the student pursues his task ; empty his pocket till he resolves to give all up, and gets respite only by a five-pound note sent by some friend the next morning. Sharpen the wits by poverty till one glove (the second is the property of another student) is carried " most effectively " in the slender hand. When the studies are completed, send the young man to a little fractious dying church, and let him be tormented, till he says of his trials, " The saw may be useful for the wood, but not for me." Put him in another church where he has some experience of litigation, and is sent out " in the ignoble capacity of a beggar." Let the wife of his youth fade before his eyes in her very springtide. Visit him with pain till he rocks himself to and fro in his pulpit, struggling with neuralgia. Transport him to London in due time, and see that he goes as a colleague. Let sharper pain assail him ; angina pectoris through long years, during which he " rallies from death-like faintnesses," and is " familiar with the sensation of dying." And if all this is not enough, visit him with blindness ; take his beloved books away. Is the spirit broken now ? Nay, in all these things he is more than conqueror ; unsubduable and sweet ; preaching, and busy with his own typewriter on new books ; toiling up the hill through the snowy winds. Verily in his case the words of Thomas Lynch were fulfilled : " the good fight was fought to music."

When Dissent is no more—when its sweetness and its bitterness are things of the past—someone will perchance be raised up fit to write its history. We

can wish him nothing better than a double portion of the spirit of Charles Stanford. He knew what it was to be pricked by its ten thousand nettles; his unclothed spirit felt the stings as hardly any other could. He knew how men live for their chapel and die for it; for that was his own experience. The "cause" was his thought by day, his dream by night, the theme of his last incoherent words at death.

The Salvation Army.

IT is a strange and sinister sign of the times that many people have encouraged General Booth who hold him in the utmost contempt, who hate his methods, who class his theology lower than that of Mohammedans and Buddhists, who would not willingly touch him or any of his army with their little finger. They hope that he will make their thrones and thronelets somewhat firmer. They are willing to give him a trifle if he will master and tame the forces they dread. Well, it is no new thing. History tells us how wealth, in its hour of danger, has enlisted and exalted the priest, has made haste to shuffle on the cloak of hypocrisy. But no man can in any degree contribute to the salvation of society who does not purify himself. The gift is nothing without the giver.

3. ITS WORK AND FAITH

I THINK young men and women in the Christian Church are beginning to seek not the great places, not the easy places, not the coveted places,

but the places where they most firmly tread in the footsteps of their Master. It will be a proof that the secret seeds of fire are still burning in the heart of the Church if this indeed be so.

Frost.

THERE is a point—and it is not difficult to recognise it—when the service ceases to be worship. It is not any longer impressed with a touch of eternity.

The Will to Believe.

ASSUREDLY the Church is too ready to find heroism only in the past. There is a disposition to question whether there be faith enough on the earth to achieve the great tasks of cleansing and adjustment which lie straight before us. But if there is no human goodness, there is no divine love, and we cannot cease to trust men and women without ceasing to trust God.

If we drive reverence and love to a distance we shall miss the inspiration by which the kingdom of God advances. The golden year itself can only come to those who have learned to know it.

The Rose of Christ

NOTHING in St. Paul's conception of the wonderful Church of Christ is more startling than his undoubting faith in the work she was to do,

and in the tender, unslumbering love that would for ever guard her. Even now, after some two thousand years of Christian history, we hardly dare to take such assurances in all their splendour. Is the Church the Body of Christ—the Fulness of Him that filleth all in all? Does the Lord indeed nourish and cherish the Church—watch her every moment; lest any hurt her, keep her night and day? To this hour the Church is among us as one that is wounded, and when St. Paul wrote she was outwardly weak, obscure, distracted, untutored. Yet to him she was beautiful as the Rose of Christ, though buried under the snow.

Saints and Heroes.

WHEN all the nondescript bands that are seeking —and many of them seeking with a true nobility of spirit—the redemption of the world, are scattered, dead, and forgotten, the ransomed Church of Christ will live to meet Him, when the Last Advent shines from east to west, and the fire is kindled that will try every man's work of what sort it is. After all, the Church of God is not a new thing in the world. We have the record of its heroes and its saints, and we know that many of them, trusting in the Cross, have lived and laboured through the long-tried day, and have been filled at the last with an eminent calm, and an inexpressible hope and courage. And yet when all was over, all that they had to say was, "Lord Jesus, receive a sinner, a poor sinner still, yea, the chief of sinners." So have dear lips

spoken that were never to speak any more till the Resurrection Day.

Christian Love and Suffering.

THERE is on earth the vividness of first love, the fervour of early passion, and this finds its likeness in the Christian's love for Christ. But there is on earth a love nobler than that, a love that glows with a great, steady ardour, with a still, intense, vehement flame, and that is the Christian ideal. This is the love that labours when all labour without it would be hard and heavy. This is the love that fights when all seems dead against it. This is the love that lifts up its spear against ten thousand, and turns the strength of the foemen at the gates. This is the love that welcomes suffering for the beloved's sake. Sacrifice is continually changing its form, but it is always present in the life of the Christian. Where it is most present, there is love warmest and kindest. When Ignatius was led to his martyrdom, and thought of the nearness of his death and pain, he said, "Now I begin to be a Christian." Well has it been said that wherever the Church goes the thick smoke of her suffering ascends to Heaven. "We are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake."

At Long Last.

AT evening time there shall be light. Our direct concern for the Church of Christ will soon end, and it will end in light and peace. Now, said

the Apostle, is our salvation nearer than when we first believed. St. Paul sailed over a rough sea, knowing little of blue sky or calm water. But he knew that he and his were not drifting before the tempest. Their vessel was directed. The unseen Captain was on board; the close would be in the haven so long desired, and every day that haven was nearer, every day some part of the rough way had been accomplished for ever. Come what might, certain victories had been won and were secure, and the end was not to be a wreck on an unknown coast. God has a safe harbour for His troubled people, and while the waves toss, we travel. We must somehow possess our past and our future in this way. We are on a voyage the days of which are numbered, the days of which are growing fewer. There will be light at evening-time whatever may befall us in the day.

> "If my barque sink, 'tis to another sea."

And, when we reach the shore, we shall look back and recall our voyage—its storms, its sunshine, but above all, its Captain; recall

> "The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet,
> Heart-shattering secret of His way with us."

The Deeper Secret.

TO one brought face to face with life, the preaching of Socialism and material comfort seems very idle. The human heart asks as passionately as ever after a deeper secret. The Church can disclose it if she will but rise from her sleep with the New Testament in her hands.

The Deep Church.

THE Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. They are revealed by the same Spirit, through His inward discipline of the soul. You learn them in the depths of bitterness and desertion, when your only psalm is *De profundis clamavi*, and your only confession, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." Or you learn them when you have sunk into some horrible iniquity, and discover there, underneath the very depths of Satan, unfathomable depths of grace. The New Testament hardly appeals to a superficial experience. It stands strangely aloof from "the shallow heavens and the shallow hells of the feebly good and the feebly wicked." But it brings us face to face with the redeeming passion of One who is at home in our uttermost human exultations and agonies. Among all His mighty sayings, perhaps none pierces deeper than this: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much."

Sometimes we grow weary of the threadbare titles which are supposed to distinguish different schools of Christian thought. People chatter idly about the High Church and the Broad Church and the Low Church. Mr. R. H. Hutton wrote a memorable essay upon what he called the Hard Church. The type of experience and character which we most need to-day might be described as the Deep Church. It is the fellowship of disciples whose hearts are enlarged to apprehend the deep things of God.

4. METHODISTS

" I have used every opportunity that has ever come in my way of getting to know the people called Methodists."

The Inspired.

IT is precisely the sayings of the early Methodists that were most challenged by their critics, that established their share in the experiences of saintly spirits, in the awful history and mystery of redeemed souls. It is not a narrow literalism that can read such words as these : " At London I met the wild, staring, loving society." " The saints of God never suffer." " All love is returned."

Their Strength and Passion.

IT is in proportion as the Primitive Methodists retain their passion for the conversion of souls that they will live and grow in England and in the world. So long as the grand old hymns are sung from the heart :

> " The voice of free grace cries, Escape to the mountain,
> For Adam's lost race He has opened a fountain,"

and

> " Stop, poor sinner, stop and think,
> Before you further go,"

so long will the heritage so hardly won by the founders be kept and extended by their children.

John Wesley.

THERE was and there is something in the vitality of Methodism which is mysterious. Wesley was no ordinary fanatic, for his brain was strong, and his judgment calm. Yet there was that in the man which cut through like a flaming sword, and he remains greater than any book that has been written about him. As for the true signs and wonders wrought by him when he preached—they may be wrought again.

THE CURE OF SOULS

" The preacher can do no greater thing for us than to make life grow more beautiful as it grows more severe. Faith is never grander than when it strengthens, as experience becomes harder and more grave. The endurance of personal trial gives a preacher power. If he can say, ' Is any man weak ? I am weak also, and weary and footsore like you,' he has the key of men's hearts."

1. IN QUIET PLACES

On Accepting Destiny.

WHAT shall we say to the " buried alive " ? This : you need not die in your graves. If a minister feels himself unsuited to his position he should do what an honourable man may to escape from it. This is a duty to his people as much as to himself. But we are thinking rather of those who are providentially hemmed in, who see that it is the will of Christ that they should labour where they are till the end. That should bring serenity and keep away death. If the work is accepted as from Him it is magnified. To the sentinel, says the poet, the hour is regal when he mounts on guard, and that plot given over by the Master to the tiller's care should be engrossing and sacred for him. Let the mind be busy and the heart be busy, and over the familiar landscape of which the preacher has been so weary, over the little cottages he has so often entered in vain, over

the weather-beaten and unresponsive countenances which have so stolidly faced him, comes a radiance from One by his side.

Better Men than You.

THE hero of the most beautiful dedication in literature—"To my dear and much admired Isaac Williams, the sight of whom carried back his friends to ancient, holy, and happy times," never got beyond a curacy.

The Thing that's Nearest.

WHEN we are overwhelmed with a sense of the complexities and perplexities through which the Church of Christ is travelling, let us address ourselves to our own little village, our own remote parish, if such be our place of work, and attend to that. For ourselves, we are not going to rest quiet while four children at least out of every five educated in our Sunday-school are lost to the Church and pass away unheeded into the world. The fact should burn into every Christian soul.

A Corner of the Vineyard.

I DO believe that the remedy for the ever-growing pressure of the world is a limitation of effort to some definite purpose. I believe that the best work in the Kingdom will now be done by men who devote

their main energy to making safe and sweet and blessed their own corner of the vineyard. I believe that the expenditure of force over many fields tends to impotence and to paralysis, and that the day has come when Christian ministers must choose their own sphere of activity in thought and action, and abide therein with God.

His Own Kingdom.

NEVER yet was the religious work of any city or any place done except by the men labouring there. Great impulses have been given by visiting ministers and by evangelists, but if those who have taken up a ministry in a place do not adequately discharge it, nothing will arrest the decay of the Church.

Rewards.

DO not labour for success or happiness. Concern yourself only with your duty, and the happiness will come. There is the success that is followed after and the success that overtakes. The success that overtakes comes to men often in the poor grey room where they sit too busy to think of anything but their work, and shines on them as an angel. I will not believe that some success and some fruitfulness have been denied to any life that has been lived under these conditions through the heat by day and the frost by night, and often with "close-lipped patience for its only friend."

Winning Souls.

WHAT the golden and wooden chest was to the Israelite, that is Christ to us. He is our Ark of the Covenant. He says to us, "Whither I go ye know, and the Way ye know." He has gone before us in our quest for the wanderers. Who will bring me into the strong city, who will bring me into Edom? That is the question that comes to us as we sit down before the fastness of a human heart. It is Christ who brings us in . . . none but Christ.

Discoveries.

LET us be exceedingly careful before we call any one destitute of backbone. It is a grave accusation, and it is often made on plausible grounds, and yet quite falsely. There are those who come very slowly to a conclusion, and are yet the most immovable and staunch of all once they have reached it. They are inaccessible to sneers and threats. They are not touched by blandishment. They may even be somewhat dull in the apprehension of argument. But they seek to know their duty, and once they know it they do it at all costs. *Nunc demum redit animus.* They pass into the safest of all forms of enthusiasm, the enthusiasm that reposes on underlying sanity and moderation. They say to themselves with Hamlet, that in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of their passion they must acquire and beget a temperance, for only thus can perfect and enduring deeds be done.

We find out what iron there is in the blood of many who were contented to remain quiet and obscure till they saw that their help was needed. How often even on this earth the first are shown to be the last, and the last first !

2. YOUNG AND OLD

The Pastor's Holiday.

WE have been told, by a very acute observer, that no minister, however popular, can absent himself four months from his congregation and find things as they were. It takes two years to win back the lost ground. Obviously if the sermons are to be worth hearing, if the organisations of the Church are to be attended to, above all, if the people are to be faithfully visited, there cannot be many days in the week to spare for travelling. Let the minister have his good and regular holiday where it is possible. He is entitled to it, and he will work better for it. But let every minister ask what holidays his people have. What holidays can a medical man allow himself, or a business man, or a journalist ? It is not too much to say that any business would crumble to pieces if it was attended to as the business of a particular congregation is often attended to by prominent ministers. What is still worse, the bloom of the spirit is destroyed by continual haranguing. The grace, the freshness, the winsomeness of the preacher are often replaced by the screaming voice, the poor tags of claptrap, the worn-out clichés of the indefatigable traveller and speechifier.

Hurrying About: A Temptation.

I QUESTION very much whether any of the younger preachers attain to the height of a few still happily with us, though too soon they must leave us. What is the reason? The reason is, I am firmly convinced, that they are being led away by the tempter in the form of a railway train. Most of us know it takes place. Whenever a man's head is clearly lifted above the crowd everyone writes to him to take this service or that, to address this meeting or that. He is at first inclined to say no, but he yields. After a while he finds it very pleasant. Railway travelling is now most comfortable when you can get your meals in a train and read with your book on a little table beside you. Then it is gratifying to go into a strange place and receive the welcome of the citizens. Sometimes the Mayor will be there to greet you, sometimes the clergy, even of the High Church party. Then there is a great crowd in a large building, many friends at the end to express their gratitude, and an enthusiastic host waiting patiently to drive you away to the best he has. Yes, it is very pleasant, and the taste for it grows. A man says, "After all, I am the servant not of one particular congregation, but of the whole Church, and I am doing more good in this way than if I were staying at home." Then he becomes very bold and tells you that he finds that railway carriages are excellent places for study. He invariably takes with him some standard work, and even writes a little in the train, so that by the time he

gets home on Saturday his two Sunday sermons for his own people are practically completed. So it happens, and it happens more and more, that the best of our younger men are all over the country all winter and all spring and sometimes all summer too. They will tell you that they are fully engaged for the next two years. They have little fat black note-books crowded with the faithful entries, and of course, before the two years are ended they have made plenty more engagements. I am quite certain that if this goes on the power of the pulpit in the Free Churches will steadily wane, and wane at a time when there is a greater demand for good preaching than there ever was, when people are touchingly grateful for a living message, but when they are also able to see with terrible clearness just how much work, how much strength, how much thought have been given to the sermon.

Trials of the Preacher.

IF the old friends could remain round a preacher, he would court no man's pulpit or fame. But how often have we stood by venerable men in little country churches, and heard them tell how here sat father, mother, brave sons and fair daughters, now beyond the sea; and there the gracious helper and friend of every good word and work; and in this place the patient, gentle, noble Dorcas. All gone, and none to take their places! The tide of life flows to the great cities, the farms are being thrown together.

The best thing is to lean back upon God, and to

go on resolutely putting all the forces of life into the essential work, and thinking not so much of results and rewards as of duties. Those, it has been said, are first in reward who have been first in service : not thinking of reward, hardly ever straightening their backs from toil, and passing as humble a judgment on their work as the last and least of their fellow-labourer upon theirs. Such lives must draw, not from the shallow streams of earth, but from the deep fountains that flow out of the throne.

Nor will they be without gladness and peace. There are, it has been said, two kinds of joy—the joy that is pursued after, and the joy that overtakes. There is the joy for which the house is swept and garnished, and which so often disappoints or fails to come ; and there is the joy that comes to the poor home where we sit at work, too busy to think of it, and brightens the commonplace surroundings and the grey colourless life. The soul that is dutiful always and in all things, is not left without such visitants.

Lift up Your Hearts.

A MINISTER who has toiled unsuccessfully for twenty, thirty, forty years may be filled with the Spirit, and find that when he is old and nearing the end he is for the first time really young and blessed and victorious. If we will lift our hearts for the rain, the autumn days, if it must be autumn, may rise with more than the vanished splendour of old mornings, and there will be no winter in our year.

3. TROUBLES AND REMEDIES

The Duty of the Pulpit.

IT is impossible not to see that many ministers, in an age when good preaching is perhaps more needed and more prized than in any other, are losing the golden hour and their hearers know it. Because the results are not immediately apparent; because a sermon thoroughly thought out seems to tell less for the moment than an impromptu effusion, they fail to put heart and conscience into their ministrations. And because Christian people are still very patient, very slow to wound the feelings of their pastors, the truth may never come out. But all the more it is bitterly felt that the preacher is a trifler. Those who know the light and strength which may be imparted by a strong and true ministry, and the dull weariness and disappointment with which many a busy and tempted man thinks of his Sunday, will never admit that any part of a minister's duty is to be compared with his duty to his pulpit. And if this duty is faithfully done, complaints of shortcoming elsewhere will at least be much assuaged. It is possible in pastoral visitation to make up for quantity by quality. The rare visits of the helpful and honoured teacher are more than the constant calls of the idle busy-body.

Narrowing the Life.

THE great teacher in these days must have the dew upon his thoughts. This can only come from long, quiet meditation, solitary contemplation.

We know very well how Newman, Robertson, Phillips Brooks, Spurgeon, Parker, Maclaren and their like became great preachers: it was because they did not fear to narrow their lives, really to cut off a great deal that was seductive and pleasant enough. They concentrated themselves fearlessly on their own task; they lived in their studies. They were not merely reading there, they were thinking, praying, adoring. So they accomplished a permanent work. Nobody need suppose that he can really think out a sermon worth listening to in a railway train.

Silence and Observation.

MANY things are said foolishly about preparation. Individuality must have its scope there as much as in work. Sir Walter Scott "made" himself among the Dandie Dinmonts in Liddesdale. When everyone thought he was wasting his time, he was gathering the stores from which the Waverley novels flowed swift and clear like running water. But preparation of some kind there must be for any worthy achievement, the preparation of thought and silence, as well as of observation and life. In proportion as a preacher seems to have neglected this, in that proportion his influence is weakened morally and spiritually, as well as intellectually.

A Word to the Idle.

THERE is no hope for those who systematically preach old sermons. Language alters, the situation alters, the preacher's mind alters, and the

sermon remains a useless relic. There are many preachers who have been years intellectually dead, adding nothing to their vocabularies, to their ideas, to their knowledge. These have no right to expect success. We do not mean that intellectual toil is sufficient. Happy is he whom the Truth by itself doth teach, not by figures and words that pass away, but as it is in itself. This must be often the preacher's prayer, "Let all the learned hold their peace; let all creatures be silent in Thy sight; speak Thou alone unto me."

The Strange Young People.

WE are afraid that many ministers do not know the young people of their flocks as the old ministers used to know them. Grant that it is not easy to become acquainted with the young. Hardly anything that is easy is worth doing. The young rarely make approaches. They have to be approached, and if they are approached in the right way they will respond. It is a difficult thing to win a young heart, but it may be done. The power exerted by a preacher whose people know him and love him and honour him is as great to-day as ever it was. Nothing will take the place of personal intercourse, and the more the nature is enriched by communion with God, the more gentle, gracious, and supreme will be the influence which consciously or unconsciously it wields.

A Delicate Task.

VERY few people have any qualification for visiting the sick.

When Winter Comes.

THROUGH the Holy Spirit is derived all the power of preaching, all its saving power. It is this which may best solve the sad problem of declining years. However lonely and cheerless circumstances may be, He is all-sufficient. Preachers may often wish they were working like Andrea Del Sarto at Florence:

> "In such a fire of souls
> Profuse, my hand kept playing by those hearts."

But how often the wish is denied, and how often they are stripped one by one of almost every sympathiser. Yet even then there is no need that their work should end in a long drift of gloom. They are called to press through the crowd of creatures to the living Lord Himself, and find that the light of Christ is the light of seven days. So may come to pass the saying, that "the wisest men are wise to the full in death."

4. CONSIDERATIONS

The Pastoral Duty.

TO save a life from failure may be almost as much as to save a soul from death.

Burning Zeal.

NO highest work is ever done without passion. No great movement has ever swept a nation apart from it. Give us that, and the light that never was on sea or land will fall on the pulpit once again.

The Weary and the Sad.

THE craving for pastoral visitation proves the deep and universal need of sympathy. The true preacher is not deceived by appearances. He is alive to the growing weariness of the world. He knows that the most envied among his hearers may be those who wish themselves well out of it, at the bottom of a quiet grave. He knows that others are devoured by anxiety ; every knock at the door means a knock at the heart. For others the summer is over, and they are left to scanty and foggy winter lights. These care for nothing but the full gospel of deliverance—the gospel of Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection.

The Longing for Guidance.

WHATEVER may seem, the world is longing for true Christian preachers. When one such comes to a city he sheds a brightness which by and by extends to its boundaries. When he departs from the city it is as if a shadow had fallen upon it. The land and the world are full of longings and welcomes to those who are sent of God with the message of the Gospel. To preach that message with faith

and power till all the years are full, you must remain students of divinity. Long after you have passed through the gates of your college, long after your teachers have passed away, you must still be diligent in the holy task which brings with it strength and joy. We must be students of divinity till the time when we go where the divinity is clearer—where the light of the Face of God is the light of His people.

The True Pastor.

EVERY minister has much to suffer. The finest natures are often, alas ! the most sensitive, and a word of discouragement will do more to cast them down than many expressions of love will to cheer. Then the true pastor has a share in every bitter cup put to the lips of his people. Then there is the labour of preaching—great and difficult as it is noble—pastoral oversight, which must not be neglected ; and a share in the work of the manifold societies and agencies, etc., that spring up in every vigorous church. Many a man goes on taking his share of all these with hardly a word of recognition, till at last he succumbs, and blind eyes are opened for an instant.

Taking Part.

ADVISING is very thankless work. It is so thankless that one of the wisest men I ever knew told me once that he had come to the conclusion that it was quite useless, and that the best thing to do was to leave people to take their own way.

A Loving Imagination.

IN order to love mankind, you must expect much from them; in order to love a soul, you must imagine it as it will be, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, the heir of eternal life, the conquering son of God.

IN THE PULPIT

"It is not often that one hears a sermon obviously spoken with gladness."

1. PREPARATION

"*Simpering.*"

IF you know that something has to be done at a certain time, you cannot begin the preparation too soon. I remember a country minister who rendered some words remarkably. He said, "I like to find the text of my Sunday sermon on Monday, and keep it simpering up and down in my mind all the week." I suspect he meant simmering. There is no doubt that the longer a subject is thought over the more adequately it is treated when the time comes for treatment.

The Word of Life.

FOR the understanding of all the great truths which must constitute the strength of the Christian ministry, there must be an immediate and supernatural illumination. There is no need to deny the value of speech. It will do much. There are runes and spellwords by which marvels are wrought in the poet's heaven of invention. But what is needed is that your hearers should feel the shock of a vital

battery, and such a battery is neither to be filled nor discharged by words. No learning and no power of intellect can by itself increase the substance of your knowledge of divine and eternal truths. And those who possess no learning, but who have studied the mind of the Spirit, those in whom Christ survives, are able to judge you and your sermons, to recognise the field which the Lord hath blessed, and the streams that make glad the tabernacles of the Most High.

2. POINTS ABOUT METHOD

A Warning.

IN the pulpit every style is good except the tiresome style.

Spiritual Energy.

UNLESS the preacher interests people in what God has said, he has done nothing. Unless he impresses his hearers by what God has said, he has not begun his work.

The Missionary Address.

IF such meetings are to be successful, an address ought to be limited to about a quarter of an hour. It is astonishing how difficult it is to deliver a brief, well-proportioned, impressive missionary address.

Young Faces.

THE sermon to children is not enough. They have to be remembered all through the worship. They have been gathered in pastoral care and pains, and if their young faces are before him and in his heart, we believe that a minister will find it very easy to say a word here and there which will make them feel that their presence is valued and sought for. Here, again, we come back to the old requisite—the revival of the pastoral heart.

An Ordered March.

AS for sermons, I could never listen comfortably to any that were not clearly divided. If you know that the preacher has a beginning, a middle, and an end, you may walk alongside of him. But if there is no continuity in the discourse, if there is no reason why it should end at one point rather than another, if there is no recognisable march of thought, the dreariness of the whole is intolerable to me. I can remember listening to such a preacher in old days, and resolving firmly not to look at the clock till a respectable period had passed. When I did look at the clock, after what seemed hours of agony, less than five minutes had passed.

Do they Listen?

SPEAKERS, and especially preachers, are almost always firmly persuaded that they have the power of commanding an audience. Who has not

known dull preachers who tell you with much complacency that whatever faults their congregations may have they are singularly attentive? And now that I think of it I have heard congregations blamed for many things by their ministers, blamed for stinginess, blamed for irregularity in attendance, and the like. But I never heard them blamed for not listening. And yet, as a matter of fact, a congregation that can listen is quite the exception. You may go from church to church, and you will not see once in a hundred times a congregation quite mastered, quite still and eager.

The Useful Element of Surprise.

IF you think of it, everybody becomes wearisome when you always know just what they will say and do in all circumstances. Many people listen without hope to their preachers. Experienced hearers can often tell you, when a text is announced, practically all that will be said upon it. I lay stress upon the element of surprise, surprise in diction, surprise in thought.

The Building.

THE sanctuary should be a place to which men may flee in times of darkness and bewilderment and care; a place where Christ is; where God bends over the worshippers, not as a dark Fate, but as a living Father.

3. THE HUNGRY SHEEP

The Great Responsibility.

SO far as our experience goes, Evangelical preachers in the Free Churches have practically ceased to pray for the unconverted or to plead with them. There are many exceptions, no doubt, but for five years at least we have not met with one. This is a terrible thing to say. If there is anything that the growing apocalypse of life, as found in literature, proves, it is that life may be, and often is, suddenly changed. It may be a thought, it may be a face that enters into it, and it is never more the same. Every preacher has in his congregation young souls waiting for the seal—on the very threshold of the Kingdom.

A Preacher's Chance.

IT is this great hope of glory that needs to be preached if Christianity is to recover its life and glow. There are not many would care to live endlessly such a life as they have lived here. They can do their work, and fight their fight, if they hear the old ringing trumpet notes, if they are stirred by the ancient promise. They know that we never attain here. They have watched the failures, they have seen that high genius just falls short of expressing itself permanently, that fortune is miserly when the one little thing is in sight which would make life rich with

a long happiness. And even when the cup of joy is drained, there is often a mysterious disappointment, or, it may be, a recoil of feeling, and the heart is left hungry and full of wishes. To say that this is to continue is to embarrass, depress, and even paralyse the life. The spirit dwindles and fades if the hope of glory, of perfection, of vision, of inviolable security, is taken from it. But we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. We have not been deluded by an unreal vision and an imaginary hope. Not far away is that inheritance, the thought of which kills the petty fears of life, and changes the face of death. The soul that struggles and strives the appointed time shall in no wise lose its reward, or be baulked of its long desire.

Sermon ! Sermon !

I HAVE been made increasingly to feel that ministers do not sufficiently believe in the power of preaching. So little is said about sermons. A man may pour out his heart's blood for years and practically hear nothing of it. He is tempted to conclude that he will do his best work in visitation and in organising. It is not so : believe me. Though hearers say little, they feel much. Those who have to fight a hard battle through the week come to church on Sunday starving for the Bread of Life. It affects all the week to come if they miss it. If they are fed they do their work more easily, more happily, more bravely. Not-

withstanding the multitudes of societies, it may safely be affirmed that such organisations do little or nothing if the preaching is not the life of all the church. That must be the fountain. If it is dried up, everything will fail.

If this be so, you must preach your very best! The sermon must be the result and efflux of your best thoughts and feelings during the week. You must live, as someone has said, for your sermon and in your sermon. Get some starling to cry "Sermon, sermon, sermon!" I have heard it said that commonplace ministers should not spend too much time in preparing for the pulpit, because the result will be much the same whether they take two or ten hours to prepare. It is a deadly fallacy. You will not preach in the humblest chapel without it being known by the people perfectly well whether you are or are not doing your best. There is no grander sight in the world than that of a man honestly doing his utmost. He commands the respect of everyone, whether he succeeds or not, and he is very apt to succeed.

A Preacher's Resources.

WOULD God that all the Lord's people were prophets! They are listened to because they are speaking from the heart. If we speak from the heart we shall also be heard. It is not our business to wait in dead stupidity, like logs by the side of a river, till a revival freshlet comes and floats us away to the other shore. The Spirit of God is working

when we yearn and pray, and His deliverance will burst upon those who seek it like sudden light from the sky.

The Hungry Sheep.

THOSE whom you preach to, here and elsewhere, cannot wait. The burden of life is heavy upon them ; their years are too few, they need to have their lives filled with a satisfying joy, and it is only God that can fill them. For these the message is "Now is the day of Salvation." The Apostles preached the Gospel to those whose circumstances were more intolerable than would be borne now, to slaves who had before them, perhaps, the dreadful plunge into the lampreys' pool. Christ Himself stood up in the midst of a little knot of forgotten Jews, at a time when the weight of life was heaviest, and said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If you go to tell men that you will teach them, that you will help them to bring in Socialism, that you will fight for this reform and that, perhaps they may laugh in your face, for they know that for bread you are giving them a stone. But you can feed them with the Bread of Life. Let us see whether there need be a suspension of the Gospel. Sorrow is not suspended, sin is not suspended, death is not suspended. Is the Gospel of Christ suspended ? Has Christ ceased to draw the human soul ? Has the Holy Ghost ceased to bless Christ's Gospel ? Do not believe this, till you have

proved it by many painful and costly experiences. You will never prove it if the Gospel is preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

4, STRAY THOUGHTS

Faithful Office-bearers.

HOW interesting it would be to know something of the deacons who served under Dr. Stoughton, their names reaching back to the time of William IV.! There are no shrines more precious than the graves, scattered here and there in country places, of the men who made Nonconformity what it is to-day. They are our possession, and not ours only; they are a national heirloom, as sacred as those tombs in the Temple Church of the knights who went long ago to the Holy Wars.

A Word to the Congregation.

THE intellect is the very last thing which many a good man lays upon the altar of Christ. He may show the keenest and finest powers in his profession or in business, but, when he stands up to address his fellow-Christians, the humblest of them see that he has nothing to say which deserves to be listened to; and this is why the burden falls always on the pastor. Now, why should not the officers and members of churches make themselves acquainted with

theology? Why should they not be able to read at least the New Testament in the original?

The Labourer's Hire.

I SPOKE once with an old Baptist minister about a sentence of Dickens, in which he speaks of a man ending miserably, who might have had the happiness of dying with children's faces round his bed. He said, "My friend, that might be the worst of dying, if one did not know how the children were to be provided for." The Lord will provide; but He provides through us. Let us see to it that our country ministers shall not be afraid to die with children's faces round their bed.

A Glance from the Pew.

THERE is something that touches one, seeing an old friend after a lapse of years. More particularly if you have the chance of prolonged observation such as comes as when he is in the pulpit and you are in the pew. No matter how eloquently or freshly he speaks—spite of yourself and him, thoughts will wander to other scenes and other days. What have the years that conquer us done to him? How has he borne up under their strain and toil? What has been his schooling? What new tones and thoughts and visions have come to him in the day and night? Or is he of those who have learned nothing, and forgotten nothing?

A Mystery of Numbers.

THERE are some five million people in London, many of them Wesleyans, many Presbyterians, many readers of *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush.* Great Queen Street Chapel holds, say, two thousand people when crowded. What I want to know is, by what mysterious contrivance just that number of people came to the service? Why should not four thousand have come, or one thousand? The place was full, and everyone knew it would be full. The upper galleries, even, were gradually occupied. But everyone got in, though if another hundred had attended there might have been much difficulty. The same problem has confronted me more or less all my life, for though very familiar with religious services, I hardly recollect a single instance when people were turned from the doors.

The Men with Experience.

OTHER things being equal, I prefer ministers tolerably advanced in life. When poor W. B. Rands was writing against Cardinal Newman, he said: "I ask pardon of your sacred office, of your spotless life, of your grey hairs, of your transcendent genius." Young men have more fire, more hopefulness, more energy, and (though not in this case) more Tennyson. But after the Lord has given and has taken away, a man is deeper. Actual contact with the Eternal—touch on touch—makes the true teacher.

Hope for All.

IT must be remembered that the man who can write one good sermon can write a thousand, and that the man who can write one good novel can generally write at least a dozen.

Think Happily.

IF the minister thinks unfavourably of his people, his people are sure to think unfavourably of him.

GENERALS OF THE CHURCH

"For the leaders in all spheres the first requirement is an indomitable hope. To have that is more than ability; more than genius."

JOHN WESLEY

THE bloom of life should come out of death. The resurrection life should pour into the depleted veins, and fill them with strength and peace. That was eminently the experience of John Wesley. Branch after branch was withered, but every time the new life rushed through all the arid fibres, and they bloomed again. There is no book, I humbly think, in all the world like John Wesley's Journal. It is pre-eminently the book of the resurrection life lived in this world. It has very few companions. Indeed, it stands out solitary in all Christian literature, clear, detached, columnar. It is a tree that is ever green before the Lord. It tells us of a heart that kept to the last its innocent pleasures and interests, but held them all loosely and lightly, while its Christian, passionate peace grew and grew to the end. To the last there are, not diminishing, but increasing, the old zeal, the old wistfulness, the calm but fiery and revealing eloquence. John Wesley was, indeed, one of those who had attained the inward stillness, who had entered the Second Rest—of those who, to use his

own fine words, are "at rest before they go home; possessors of that rest which remaineth even here for the people of God." It is with peculiar love and reverence that one comes to his closing days, and follows him to his last sermon at Leatherhead, on the words, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near"; and watches by his triumphant death-bed, and hears him say, "The clouds drop fatness."

PRINCIPAL RAINY

Rare and Wise.

DR. RAINY was one of the greatest of Churchmen, and the name of his Church was deeply graven upon his heart. Her solicitudes occupied his last waking moments. He, we may be sure, was not one of the exiles who needed Jeremiah's precept, "Let Jerusalem come into your mind." Jerusalem had been in his mind, his thought by day, his dream by night this many a long year. But to those who saw him of late years it was evident that he who had carried the cross of the earthly Jerusalem, prayed for her peace, toiled for her triumph, had let the heavenly Jerusalem come much into his mind. He was watching for the great door to open and the welcoming angels beckon. The nearest and the dearest had gone first. The fourscore years were over; life was by the day and hour, and the mother city was smiling down on the old pilgrim.

He gave an extraordinary impression of wisdom

Here was a wise man ; take heed of him. Nor can it be doubted that he was a wise man, and wise not only as a great man of the world is wise, but with a wisdom that was rooted very deep. He was more than adequate for all the work of a leader. When he saw it to be safe he could laugh away a matter of threatening aspect.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES

PERHAPS his conversation was more remarkable even than his public speaking. We remember no conversationalist quite like him. He was a careful and accurate listener, and at the same time a most copious and eager talker. In this, as in other things, he seemed always to be parting with vitality.

A Born Soldier.

HE was practically sagacious in the highest degree. He knew what he longed for, what he wished to do. He had the gift of getting things done. He often appeared to be intemperate in expression, but this was not really so. He had an exaggerated way of speaking. Every hour was regal to him. But his nature was cautious and conservative, and he had all the attributes of a great general. He did not know how to take care of himself, and so to-day multitudes mourn and miss him, and will continue to miss him all the time between the digging of his grave and theirs.

THE PREACHER'S READING

"Comes the afternoon, when Mr. Fritterday is not to be found fault with if he indulges in desultory reading. But there are two ways of reading. Mr. Fullday makes the discovery that all books are commentaries on Holy Scripture. When the minister does that, when he cuts a channel between his general reading and his sermons, he has achieved a notable victory."

Why he Quailed.

I MET a minister not very long ago who actually told me that he had read in his railway journeys Macleod Campbell on the Atonement. To do him justice, he quailed before my silent and prolonged contemplation of his face. Of course, Macleod Campbell cannot be read in a railway train. The thing is utterly inconceivable. You might as well say that you had read "Sordello" while crossing Piccadilly Circus.

Reading Printed Sermons.

IT is tempting to think that the hours largely spent in silent fuming might introduce us to Taylor and Newman. Surely their words would fall on many parched congregations like summer rain. But the suggestion is an old one, and, so far as we know, it has never been successfully tried.

The Death of the Mind.

YOUR great danger is that your minds may die long before your bodies. The preacher who is put down by the cry that congregations will have young men is not much to be sympathised with. Congregations will have young men, and they are right in this, but they must not reckon youth by years. Try to make every year a year of growth for mind and heart. There is one way worth trying. Take one great teacher and give him the best part of your winter. Have a Wesley winter, a Maurice winter, a Wordsworth winter, a Jonathan Edwards winter, and you will find that the company of great men is adding cubits to your stature. We are dead when we cease to grow. We cease to be ministers of Christ when we cease to be students of divinity

How to Use Books

GET your thought from the fountain, from the New Testament. When you have arranged it in divisions it does not matter what book you read, if you read a good book. Any good book read long enough will furnish you illustrations, illustrations infinitely more real, fresh and brightening than those you will get out of any encyclopædia, because you have found them yourself. That is the way in which the preacher should use books.

Power of Certain Books

THE most graphic pictures of the marvellous shows of time will fail to touch, if they do not show the Master Who moves behind them. Books as books can do something, but nothing equal to the needs ; books that are preachers may beat down the worst in us, inspire the best, answer the questions that tire us with their importunity, and help us to make our lives not a rubbish-heap, but a temple.

Growing Wise.

JOHNSON was right when he said that if a man would read anything four hours a day, he would by and by grow wise. Books will fit a man for his work ; they will teach him large, noble, merciful thoughts ; they will widen the horizon about him ; will help him to understand the spirit of the days ; and they will enrich his preaching in proportion as he learns to group all knowledge round the Name which is highest in earth and heaven.

On Finding One's Own.

I ONLY ask you to find one great writer whom you love, and with whom you keep company. I do not care who it is. It may be Shakespeare, Meredith, George Eliot, Browning, Tolstoi—I might add many names. If you choose an opulent, sincere, and governing mind, and if you are thoroughly impregnated and saturated with his thoughts and words, a

portion of his spirit will pass to yours. I may add that men not known to the public are often the chief authorities on certain authors and subjects. The chief authority on Christian mysticism is a Baptist minister, who has never published any book on the subject.

An Appearing of God.

A BEGINNING of days to many preachers would be to take possession of some new province of literature, as Robert Hall did when, after sixty, he studied Italian to read Dante; as Arnold did when, two years before his death, he began Sanskrit, pleading that "he was not so old as Cato when he learned Greek." How many weary and starved congregations listen hopelessly to a dejected preacher who will never give them a word, or phrase, a thought they have not heard hundreds of times. An appearing of God to such a man would send him to his desk, and keep him there.

Two Persons not to be Found.

HOW many ministers are there who have a passion for reading? It is perhaps not fair to appeal to the size of their libraries, for the owners are as a rule poor, and have not many opportunities of getting books. Yet in this, too, the adage holds that where there is a will there is a way. In the course of my life I do not think I have met with half

a dozen persons whose reading could be said to be very wide or various. Further, of these there was not one who had not greatly benefited by his reading, and was not enabled through his knowledge of books to exercise an influence which he would not otherwise have possessed. I am looking in vain for two persons whom one frequently hears denounced in sermons and in addresses—the man who wastes his time in omnivorous reading, and the Christian who needs to be warned against expecting too much in the way of answer to prayer.

To be Pitied.

"I NEVER read anything," said a clergyman the other day; "I have no time for books." Said another man: "I could never read Scott; I was never able to get beyond the first chapter of any of his books." Well, I can conceive these statements being made humbly, honestly, and inoffensively. It is quite true that there are worthy people who can see nothing in Scott. They are much to be pitied, and they ought to pity themselves, as their failure to appreciate Scott means a strange mental incapacity. They would act wisely in saying little about it.

Exhortation.

YOU will discover that the great danger before you is not that you will turn into criminals or blackguards, not that you will wreck your life and shame your kindred. Happily there are not many

black sheep in the flock. The danger is that you become respectable, decent, commonplace, uninteresting mediocrities.

One Way of Marking.

WHEN I see anything interesting in a book I turn down the page, making no mark of any kind. As a rule I can discover the passage or phrase which interested me at an interval of years.

A Word to the Wise.

HOW little originality there is in most men's reading! We would not disparage the perusal of the books, the newspapers, the religious newspapers of the day. It is essential to understand the spirit of the time. But how few are at pains to enter into the thoughts of Butler, or Dante, or Jonathan Edwards, or the mystics, or the great French Roman Catholic writers. Yet it is certain that minds naturally sterile and anæmic have been permanently enriched and vitalised by some such companionship.

To be Faced.

IT is unquestionable that the poor speaker may be taught to be a very fair speaker, and that a fair speaker may become a good speaker, and the good speaker very good. What is doubtful is whether the good speaker can become excellent

Our Magazines.

YOUR library should reflect simply your own taste. You are not bound to get Kinglake's *History of the Grimean War* to please anybody. You are not bound to exclude volumes of the *Earthen Vessel* if they please you. . . . I venture to say that there are few better additions to a collection of books than good sets of magazines. In these are stored up much of the best thought and the best writing of the time.

What to Buy.

A WELL-USED encyclopædia will change the whole mental attitude. One of the best things ever said about self-culture was that the greatest change that ever occurs to anybody pursuing knowledge is the change from an ignoramus to a fairly well-informed person. "You cannot swim ten yards, but you can swim, and it is not the distance in yards, but the distance between wading and swimming which it is so difficult to get over." A new power has been acquired, though its development to any respectable extent may still be a difficulty of the future.

EMINENT PREACHERS

"The mysteries of God are revealed only to humble souls on bended knees."

DR. PARKER

I

The Cry to Christ.

FOR multitudes there was no preacher like him. He showed power from the first, but he took bad models, and his taste was imperfect. It is wonderful to trace his progress, to see how he toiled and how he ascended. To other preachers he owed almost nothing. The one preacher whose influence is traceable in his later work is Newman, and Newman was almost the only sermon-writer whom he read for many years. I make no attempt to analyse his preaching, or to discover the secret of his power. It was a spiritual wonder. There was about it the touch of miracle. Apparently free from rule, it was unconsciously obedient to the great principles of art. As you listened you saw deeper meanings. The horizon lifted, widened, broadened—the preacher had thrust his hand among your heart strings. You heard the cry of life, and the Christ preached as the answer to that cry. The preacher had every gift. He was mystical, poetical, ironical, consoling, rebuking by turns

II

His Humility.

DR. PARKER was extremely sensitive. Perhaps sensitiveness goes much more often with genius than with talent. He greatly lacked self-confidence, and lived in the constant need of encouragement.

He never forgot to be grateful. His was a nature that had much need of brightness, and he would often pray for some visible sign or token that he was doing good.

III

His Genius.

BETWEEN his congregation and his home his life was practically lived until his wife died. After that he turned very strongly to two or three friends who visited him every week. In general company he had little to say, but among his own, and especially in dialogue, he was at his very best. As a rule he wakened up slowly, but once embarked in the full stream of conversation, he was vivacious and brilliant to an extraordinary degree. He then showed himself a man of genius. I have met men cleverer, and more accomplished, and even men more alert, but never a man, with perhaps one exception, more plainly possessed of the indefinable quality called genius. In conversation he could adapt himself to his companion, but, latterly at least, he liked nothing so well as to discuss his texts with a sympathetic hearer, or to recall his memories of the past. He would

often speak with the utmost finish, precision, and beauty.

DR. ALEXANDER M'LAREN

I

Highland Chieftain.

FROM his youth he looked like a Highland chieftain born to command. In any company where he sat was the head of the table. Before you knew he was a prophet you were sure he was a king. Who can forget that wonderful face, tender and stern, more beautiful and more saintly as the years went on, with the lights and shadows sweeping over it? Who can forget the flash of those magnetic, dominating eyes? There was a kind of regal effulgence about him in his great moments. He might have been anything—soldier, politician, man of letters, man of science, and in any profession he would have taken the head. He was gifted with a swift and clear-cutting intellect. He had also a true vein of poetry and genius. He could master any subject, and he had an all-sided strength and capacity. These gifts were early brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

II

Emperor and Magician

HE had the temperament of an orator, and he acquired the rare faculty of speaking better English than he could write. It was amazing to see him in the pulpit, absorbed by the passion of the moment, and yet summoning and dismissing his

phrases. You could see the double process going on, the mind shaping the consummate sentence behind the act and ardour of utterance. At last words came at his call, or without being called. He commanded words as an Emperor and as a magician. In his very loftiest flights one hardly knew whether he spoke or sang; it was "Speech half asleep or song half awake."

"MR. JULIUS"

I

"*We Flash and Fade.*"

I KNOW of some who will be found on the right hand whatever the priests and doctors say, because they have seen Christ an-hungered, and have given Him meat.

You cannot hear Mr. Julius pray without knowing that you are in the presence of a devout and spiritual, if perplexed nature. "Thou art the Infinite One; we are the finite many. We flash and fade; Thou abidest. Our thought fails like a spent bird before Thee." He clings to the great certainties; "Whatever secrets the silence may hide, may we ever say 'I must do my duty.'" "Be gracious to those to whom Thou hast come bereavingly. In Christ the living and the dead meet, though they cannot now speak or clasp hands—and they are one in the faith of His Eternal Kingdom."

I never cease to wonder at the exquisite lucidity and beauty of his style—never a word failing or out of place. Not perhaps a strong man for great public

tasks—rather silent, sensitive, and courting the shade ; he is, nevertheless, a finely tempered instrument, if ever one was. I have left the little place sometimes feeling that nowhere perhaps in Britain had there been that day a more lavish expenditure of thought and imagination.

II

The Dire Offence.

THE great offence in Blossoming Lane Chapel is to cough. Mr. Julius shows great lenity to other offenders, but to those who cough, none. He considers coughing a voluntary act of the evil will, and the greatest injury a man can do his fellows. Any hearty, healthy stranger who has been accustomed to take his cough in his church stands a good chance of being withered by one of Mr. Julius's glances, if he is not even publicly rebuked. I have resolved on my own line of action if I am rebuked. I mean to rise and deliver a brief Vindication of Coughing, which I have composed on the basis of Mr. Pickwick's advice to Mr. Peter Magnus. I shall first glance briefly at the universality of the practice, as proved by history and the enormous number of patent medicines.

PRINCIPAL CHARLES EDWARDS

I

A Great Personality.

EVERYONE who had the friendship of Dr. Edwards must feel that such a friendship was in itself a very great distinction. Of all the men we have

ever known he was in many ways the most remarkable, the most individual. Were we compelled to put our impression of him into one sentence we should say he is the only man known to us, since Spurgeon died, who might have been the founder of a great sect.

No one who ever heard Dr. Edwards preach will forget the experience. He began with his little Bible in his hand, speaking slowly in a low voice, and gradually rose to the height of eloquence and passion. He never lowered his preaching, but, like Mr. Spurgeon, brought his hearers face to face with the most august themes. When Spurgeon, as a youth, came to London, he did not preach about the anecdotes of the Bible, but took for texts : "Accepted in the beloved," "No man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him," and so plunged into the deep sea. In the same way, Dr. Edwards from the first asked his hearers to think, and to think profoundly ; but his thoughts were all of them fused in passion.

II

His Detachment.

THERE was about Dr. Edwards most noticeably that "solemn scorn of ills" which seals the great saint. He was very sensitive, very modest, easily wounded, yet with a certain high disdain of life's dangers and evils.

DR. LIDDON

A Gleam of the Spirit.

CONSTRAINING is the charm exercised by those who can lead us, every time they preach, by untravelled lanes into unvisited nooks, who can show us some hidden spot in the mountains of truth that front us. But to many it is a greater thing when they see a new beam of light gild the solemn array. This his words did at times. In a sermon of which all the rest might seem ordinary there would be a sentence which woke the responses of the diviner mind, which revealed all the kingdoms of the spirit and the glory of them, which opened the eyes for ever.

HUGH BLACK

A Preacher with Reserve.

YOU feel, in listening to Mr. Black, that he gives you from time to time indications of power and passion carefully kept under restraint. The note of frugality so much praised by our more judicious critics is in his work, but it is not the frugality of a poor man.

IV. IMMORTALITY

"I believe everything that I have written about immortality."

Said by W.R.N. a few days before his passing.

BEREAVEMENT

" Our dead have not forsaken us. However it may seem sometimes, we do not want for friends."

Cry of the Pilgrim.

WHAT if this life is our Exile and Captivity, and Death our Return ?

The Blessed Hope.

TO those who have lived much in the life of the affections there comes a time when the memory of loss is little more than a promise of more perfect gain.

Courage !

THE first thing I should say to anyone in the dust of a sudden blow is, " Hope on." I am content to say that we should resolve to wait and see what time will do for us. Of course in a certain sense time does nothing at all. It is what takes place in time that helps us, that soothes the pain, that heals the wound.

A Haunted House.

THAT this life is a haunted house built on the very confines of the land of darkness and the shadow of death, that we are united by a thousand

fibres with the other world, is denied by few. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in his undismayed way, infinitely extends this truth for all who hold his faith.

Looking Beyond.

WHEN we do our best, the ideal is still beyond us to chill and dishearten. Yet not beyond us, if we look to the other life, to our breaking through this thraldom of the flesh, and the coming to pass of the strange great words, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Consolations drawn from this life do not touch what is deepest in sorrow. Time can heal much, but there are troubles beyond its skill. For these we must call in eternity. There are empty places which must be empty till the angels' faces "smile with the morn." There are agonies in the presence of which we can only say that all sorrow is short-lived enough. It is but a little while. Those on whom life and death have wreaked their worst are not defeated if they can look beyond to their "triumph o'er grey time."

Meredith on Immortality.

"YOU believe in it?" he said. "But for my part I cannot conceive it. Which personality is it which endures? I was one man in youth and another man in middle age." He then moved his stick in the ground and said, "I have been this and this

and this and this. Which is it that is immortal?" I ventured to remind him of what John Stuart Mill said about the persistence of the ego. He said, with some vehemence, "I do not feel it. I have never felt it. I have never felt the unity of personality running through my life. I have been"—this with a smile—"I have been six different men: six at least. No," he said, "I cannot conceive personal immortality." This is the teaching of his writings, though I think there are hints in them of "a morn beyond mornings."

In the Dark Room.

IN the heaviest day of daze and death there is for believers a fellowship with Christ in agony. Before any secret of providence is disclosed; when the softest words are harsh; when the heart is sealed and inaccessible to any earthly comfort; when even prayer for the moment is impossible, Christ is in the dark room with the soul which He redeemed, and which He keeps alive. There is not happiness; there is not the hope of happiness; but there is the assurance of the righteousness, the pity, the pardon of the Eternal Love. That the bleeding heart needs this, and is content with this, is a thought and emotion so exalted that it proves itself divine. It is not any poor, earthly cowardly desire for happiness and ease. We think it is Elizabeth Stuart Phelps who says that the ultimate religious tenderness of man towards God, so high, so pure, so reasonable, could only have come from God. Whoever said it, it is true. A believing

pauper, quite solitary on earth after a life that has stripped her bare, kneeling in peaceful affection before Him Whose outward gifts have been so few, is a witness to the victory of faith over the world. The vestibule may be strait and lampless, but her hand is on the door.

The Help of Saints.

I ALWAYS picture Christ standing between us and holding with His right hand so many of His believers and with His left hand so many. He merges us with them. They are in the full light, and we are in the twilight. But we both hold the hand of Christ, and constantly from the left hand to the right hand new souls are passing. Have the triumphant saints forgotten those who are still fighting the fight of faith? Are they not permitted to speak to them and to help them when they need it? We cannot answer the question definitely, but surely it is right to believe that for the joy of the dead they are sometimes permitted to hearten and succour those whom they leave unwillingly to the toil and moil of the common day.

There is often a true brotherhood between the faithful living and the faithful dead, and it is never understood so completely as when we sit at the Lord's Table and hear Him say, "This is My Body; this is My Blood." We are one then in the communion which is based on the Redeemer's atoning sacrifice. We lay our sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God.

The Sunshine of Heaven.

TO resist temptation is to choose a portion with the pure, who, as in our inmost hearts we know, must in the end triumph openly. All that is sacred in memory and in affection draws us from pollution to their side. How many has the thought saved: "If I am to spend eternity with her, I must spend it in the presence of Jesus Christ."

Yes; the further pier of the bridge that spans life rests on the unseen shore. This life is much as the time for discipline, for preparation, for hearing and obeying the Spirit and the Bride. But it is little as the time for happiness, for success, even for achievement. It is the porch dismantled and wind-blown, yet not uncheerful if there falls on it the steady sunshine of the other world. Only thus shall we touch and lift the life of the millions who say with the factory-girl quoted by Dr. Newman: "I think if this should be the end of all; and if all I have been born for is just to work my heart and life away in this dull place, with those mill-stones in my ears for ever, until I could scream out for them to stop and let me have a little quiet: with my mother gone, and I never able to tell her again how I loved her, and of all my troubles—I think if this life is the end and there is no God to wipe away all tears from all eyes I could go mad."

The Old Light.

WHAT touched our souls to eternal issues is itself eternal. In the vast realm of spirits none can be to us what these are that came nearest

us in time. The very thought of such a possibility is profanation. The faded sunsets, the dead roses, we forget. New lights and new flowers repeat for us the past. But the light of souls cannot be borrowed or repeated. The deep heart closes over its grief, and though the grave be green and smooth, it holds the dead

The Precious Promise.

HE repeats His promise. He says it to a world of partings: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He says it to a world of heart-break: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He says it to a world of need: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He says it to a world of weakness and weariness and fear: "I will never, never leave thee; I will never, no never, forsake thee."

At the End of the Road.

IT is possible to see that our business is to live, that God has work for us, even if, for the time to come, we are only able to keep pace with the wounded. If death were robbed of its terrors—if it were, as it might have been, the crowning joy of life—how could men go on living, working, waiting? It is good for us that Paradise, according to the deep Eastern saying, should still lie under the shadow of swords.

And if the communion could be resumed, the whole heart would be drawn away from the present

life and its duties. Because He means us to abide for a season, the sweet voices are still. Yet He remains, and in Him there is union with those lost awhile. The more truly our fellowhsip is with the Father and the Son, the more truly is it with them. Who shall say that through Him new currents of covenanting love may not even yet pass between us?

"I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I committed unto Him." That which I have committed unto Him. Who can read the secrets of the Apostle's soul? How much is coming into the words as these mortal years run out! But we know the end. "Do we sink," said Carlyle, "in these swamps, amidst the dance of dying dreams?" No; we have before us no treacherous morass, no infinite inane, no vague and formless mist, but at the end of a short road the light, the warmth, the love, the welcome of Home.

For Peace in Love.

LIFE is a continual bereavement, and the best treasures and the best affections go down one by one into the grave. Is that the end of them? Are we never to find them again? Are we always to be at the mercy of the scent of a flower, or the sound of a bell, or a fading picture? True love, as St. Bernard says, very deeply, gathers not strength from hope. But for peace in love there must be hope of a meeting beyond the sea.

Favourite Lines.

WE believe these lines that follow are undoubtedly the finest Mrs. Clive ever wrote, perhaps the most poetical rendering of the great Resurrection fact anywhere to be found—though this is saying much.

"One place alone had ceas'd to hold its prey;
A form had press'd it, and was there no more;
The garments of the grave beside it lay,
Where once they wrapp'd Him on the rocky floor.

He only with returning footsteps broke
Th' eternal calm wherewith the tomb was bound;
Among the sleeping dead alone He woke,
And bless'd with outstretch'd hands the host around."

The Promise of May.

THE companionship that made life a holy and happy thing was cut short just at the opening. The plans with which the eager heart teemed all came to nothing. What forces of thought and love we have seemed to spend in vain! Are there wounds that cannot be healed, losses that cannot be made good, griefs that cannot be forgotten? The answer is in the prophecy of May—of everlasting spring and unwithering flowers.

Here the winter comes back after the spring, and we tremble lest we be too happy. The envious heavens, we think, will be tempted to strike down upon our bliss, and over the whole world lies the shadow of turning. But God meant us to be happy, perfectly

blessed to all eternity. The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy on their heads. Joy and gladness—that have flown so high above, so far in front—we shall come up with them at last and hold them in our hands, "their wings covered with silver and their feathers with yellow gold," and sorrow and sighing shall flee away—the night birds down the night.

How to Endure.

THE anguish of bereavement, the profound stirring of the emotions when we think of the life into which has already passed so much that was very part of our own being, lies in the fact that we are parted, though it is but for a time.

The compensation is that we see and hear Jesus, that we can speak to Him and receive his reply, that He will fill our weak and restless hearts, if we ask Him, with His own strength and peace.

The Most Lonely.

IT is a consolation that God takes for His peculiar charge those who are left most lonely and helpless, and a little experience of life will show that His Providence is a living fact. But Jesus knows all that the bereaved have to suffer. He comprehends the longings of the famished heart. He knows what it is to feel as if life must henceforth be endured, not

any longer lived. He knows the first fever of feeling, and the terrible reaction when the stricken souls long for the duties from which they are now so sadly free. He knows how often when work begins the sense of desolation increases, till nothing is left for weary weeks but the grey comfort of thinking that the end is not so very far away. But He knows also that all is not told when the outward circumstances are known or guessed at. We never know till we know Himself. Then we understand how in the darkest hour the path may open like a shaft of light to the Heart of all Comfort. Christ knew that God had to be trusted, and that His soft hand would draw together the edges of the wound.

Courage, Poor Heart of Stone!

LET troubled and lonely hearts take fresh courage. They may have to go softly all their years. The voices that once thrilled them are for the moment past hearing. But when death brings us closer to God we shall know that He has been in all ways just and faithful and loving to us. With what a rush our spirits will run to reunite themselves with the beloved! They, too, will make haste to meet us, and in utter thankfulness and humility we with them shall claim the Redeemer as our Lord and Friend, and fall at the feet of perfect Goodness, perfect Purity, and perfect Love.

After All.

WE know how in the heaviest afflictions there is almost always something left to hold by, something to live for. Yet there may be a desolation which is humanly complete. Even then a spring of joy remains. "I am with you all the days," and the joy in Christ is to persist, though all the other lights are blown out. So it may be, so it has been. This is not a dream, however it may seem to be one.

"*In Memoriam*"

IT is worth noting, that Tennyson, so far as the record goes, had no supreme friend after A. H. Hallam. I doubt whether he had any woman friend even. "In Memoriam" was, in the full sense of the word, a sincere book, for it commemorated an affection for which the writer never found any substitute. By the way, has it been sufficiently remarked that "In Memoriam" makes but a limited appeal to the bereaved? Its intensity has carried it through; but when we think of it, we shall see that the bereavements in life that leave aching, unhealed wounds are not of the type Tennyson commemorates.

What must be Faced.

IT is not true that people get over everything Many die of grief, but the greater number of those who are not cured are altered. Mrs. Oliphant expresses it best. She says that after the loss of her little

daughter she became another being—better, perhaps, in some ways than she had been, but different. All of life is set to a lower key ; the mind takes a darker colour. Work remains, and, it may be, pleasure, and success, and friendship, and love, but it is never as it has been. One day cuts through life like a ploughshare. Grief, like love, is apt to go on.

DEATH

"Though it seems for the time as if the whole story of life, embroider and adorn it as we may, is love, loss, and grief, yet at the deathbed there is oftentimes a 'wind-warm' space of love, during which the soul knows that things are not what they seem, and that though bond after bond is apparently being broken, the ties of the everlasting union are tested and hold. Words of love spring up from the deep and secret wells of the spirit. Christ is made known to His people, and they confess that His right hand, through which the great nails went, doeth valiantly, and is exalted in the waste and wreck of death."

The Thief and the Dawn

NO longer an outcast of Gehenna, no longer racked and forlorn, the thief drank of the spiritual Rock beside him, and that Rock was Christ. Already he had burst the shell of the mortal, and was of those over whom the second death hath no power. Before Christ lay the morning of the eternal open world, and the shadows of this narrow life had vanished too from the heart that nestled in His promise. Ere night, Jesus, and the child God gave Him, had entered on that Day, fresh as morning, tender as eve, "which hours no more offend."

The Power of Jesus.

HE came and laid His hand on the bier, and the dead wood thrilled and quivered at the touch. That Hand! The Father loveth the Son, and hath

given all things into His Hand. That Hand, the Hand that was to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. That Hand not yet nailed! And He said: "Young man, I say unto thee, arise. Arise." And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. Is not this the Saviour we need? The Saviour Who is a barrier against the drift of death. Shall we not say: "Lo, this is our God. We have waited for Him, and He will save us." His compassions fail not. He tarrieth not for man, nor waits for the son of man. He speaks and it is done. He commands and it stands fast. The mother made only the mute appeal of her sorrow, but He needed no more. The fulness of His life streamed out for a moment, and the young man rose and spoke.

The Christian Action

CHRISTIANITY will help us to meet enforced inaction. It will help us more easily, no doubt, if we have laboured while we could. Then we can reflect in the long, passive hours that "of toil and moil the day was full." Even if the cherished work has been forbidden, if it has been hardly begun, or not begun at all, the depression of failure may very well be banished by the thought of an undying life in God. After all, we are never old till we feel old, and nobody feels old until he feels that his work is done. So long as there is in us some faculty hidden from daylight, some capacity still unrevealed, some work still

to accomplish, we are young, and faith looks to the future life as the development and completion of this. The night taper, says one, burns long enough if it lets in the Eternal Day. There may be, there doubtless is, a momentary pang in surrendering some kinds of work to which we thought ourselves specially elected, and yet in these things also God is worthy of our trust. Perhaps there is no such unspeakably pathetic resignation as that of a mother parting from her children. And yet every day with what victorious faith is this care cast upon God! Schiller, on his premature deathbed, kissed and blessed his youngest child of seven months old, and gazed at the helpless creature with yearning tenderness. Yet a little while later, when they asked him how he felt, he said, "Calmer and calmer." Is there any better preparation for life and death than that of the girded loins and the burning lamp?

The Death of the Lord.

HE was unconquered by death. His death was the Lord's death and the Lord's doing. He foresaw and meant it from the first. When it came He went to meet it not as a Stoic with iron will refusing to wince, nor as one superior in all but power, and yet giving power its due. Death met Him at the trysting-place He, and not death, had chosen. It had no power at all over His soul, and none over His body save what He gave it. None could tear away the garment of His mortality; but when the hour struck, He folded

up His life like a vesture, and it was changed The Holy Thing that slept in Joseph's grave held the myriad forces of corruption at bay till the soul returned. Then He awakened, and lifted up His pierced Hands and blessed the sleepers at His side—whose sleep was to be so long—whose waking was so sure

No Make-believe.

HOPE in the Old Testament often means simply a fixed gaze. There comes an hour when all striving is idle, when we must simply look up at the sky, now pitiless, clear, cloudless, but near changing. When our wills lie bowed like reeds in the river, the strongest current will not break them—even the current that would snap opposing bands of iron. We have no make-believe about death. Christianity has nothing to do with illusions. It is always thankful. Faith sees all the hard things of life as good and acceptable and perfect in the Will of God. Through the dullest web of existence it can shoot the shining strands that make it triumphant, peaceful, strong. It knows that there is a soul of sweetness in all the bitter things whereby God prepares His children for their great Passover. It fortifies itself meanwhile by continually ascending to the Source of Sacrificial Life. *La force est aux sources*—the strength of our cause is at the Fountain-head, and we go there to seek it

Its Suddenness.

WE are from time to time made to realise that the ground beneath us which seems so solid and substantial is as unstable as any gossamer.

At the Worst Moment.

WE know that the Father has sanctioned the very blow we find it so hard to bear. By faith we are able to give thanks on our Calvary, in the misery of lonely tears, watching by the dearest asleep in their deep sleep. To say then, *Magnificat anima mea*, is to be under the benediction of the Cross, to offer in very truth the sacrifice of praise.

Death a Sleep.

ST. PAUL himself recognised that death was the last enemy to meet Christ in the field and to be destroyed. And yet so absolute was Christ's victory over death that in the New Testament it is spoken of as sleep.

The Little Hills in the Churchyard.

WE know that for the Christian there is no death ; that Christ by rising again, the firstfruits of His sleeping people, has plucked the sting from death and spoiled the victory of the grave ; and so we can look calmly at it, and have peace—peace by the death-beds of our dear ones, peace when our own life is slipping away from us, peace as we stand by the grave

where already we have two or three gathered together in His name, peace in the thought that they all live to God, peace in the hope of the day to be when the little hills in the churchyard shall rejoice on every side —at the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. For Christ has abolished death.

The Church in the Churchyard

WHERE two or three are gathered together in His Name under the sod, there is Christ in the midst of them.

THE NEW COUNTRY

"We are come to Zion, the city of the living God. I do not know who may be praying for me in the General Assembly and Church of the first-born. I think there are some. I am sure I am not too bold in saying I know there is One, the Intercessor Whose pleadings know no pause."

Life there More Real.

HENRY DRUMMOND'S departure for the new country has made the other life for many, in an unspeakable degree, more real and more winsome.

The Fortress-home.

FRIENDS fail us, death takes our truest, and yet we can count on that love which is constant in all worlds, through all years, that love in which the dead are living and the lost are found, that love which does not die when we die, that does not cease to care when we can care no longer, that love in which we and our beloved dwell as in a fortress-home.

The Christian Journey.

WHAT a story the life of every Christian here has been! Shall we in heaven be able to look back on the steps of the way? The Welsh hymn has it:

> "From Salem's high walls we shall witness
> The windings of life's river through."

Shall we see the journey in all its stages, and say to ourselves, "At this point I very nearly gave up, at this point I very nearly went astray, at this point I was very weary in well-doing, at this point that night was black over my head?" Yet all that is over and told for ever.

In the City of Peace.

TO the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of peace, the redeemed of the Lord go up from all the lands of life. And if we are Christ's, received into the communion of the Redeemer and His righteousness, we shall feel that this and this only is our true home, and we shall draw near to it, not timidly, not shrinkingly, but with eager desire, as those who are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. As we understand the depth of the final rest, we grow reconciled to our bereavements. It seems indeed more natural that the beloved should be withdrawn from us than that they should ever have been at our side.

Expected Guests.

THE home to which He brings them is prepared, and by His own hands. To die is not to pass into the wide, grey, lampless, deep, unpeopled darkness. When a child is born on earth into a loving home, how much thought and affection have gone into preparation for its coming? It enters feeble and

ignorant into an unknown world. But for every want there has been already a provident care. So, but far more abundantly, is there a preparation made for us in the other life. They are waiting for us there. We are ushered with the divinest tenderness into our own place. What welcome is too rapturous for the soul that has trusted Christ, and has been carried to God in His arms?

Ever since Jesus left this world, He has been preparing and receiving in the other.

The Care of God.

I BELIEVE that the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and that there shall no torment touch them. I believe that our care was ungentle, and our love untender, and our sympathy imperfect, compared to that which they have in His keeping who is their God and our God. If it were otherwise, I should find no refuge in earth or in heaven.

Who shall go over the sea for us? We do not need to put the question. There is One who has gone over the sea for us, and returned. Read the holy history of Jesus Christ—of His life, His passion, His Death, His Resurrection, His return to earth, His Ascension to the right hand of the Father. Here we have our all-sufficing answer. He went over the sea for us, over the waves and billows of death, and returned—returned to Mary, to Peter, to Thomas, to five hundred brethren long asleep.

Visible and Invisible.

WE have our place in the world that can never crumble to dust. The kingdom which cannot be moved is about us now. It glimmers through the show of things. We have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and the importunate and ever-shifting objects of sense do not blind us to its glories. It is written—and we know it—that even here and now we are come to the living God, His City, His angels, and His people, to Jesus, the Mediator of a fresh covenant, and the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better than Abel. Nay, the visible shrinks and pales for the enrichment of the invisible, and the departed are no more silent at our feet, but singing overhead. But ere we inherit all things this mortal must put on immortality, and the thin veil through which shines the light of the seven lamps of fire must be taken away.

Our Dearest and Best.

THERE is nothing Christian in the view that we ought to have no special love for any human being, but love all in God and God in all. The Divine Heart, in Whose affections none were crowded or jostled, "loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Yet it is by virtue of the spiritual bond that love endures. When our thoughts pass beyond the veil, we realise that the true union is harmony of feeling; that we have our meeting in the common love of Christ. We are nearest our dead when our thoughts

take the unchangeable direction of theirs. Then, in a true communion, we come to the perfect in their perfection, to an intercourse which is all Christian, to where our loved ones, in Fletcher of Madeley's words, "blossom and shine in the primeval excellence allotted to them by their gracious Creator." Between our love for them and our love for Christ there is no disharmony. If the Saviour said in dying, "And now I come to Thee"; if His strong Apostle desired "to depart and to be with Christ, which is very far better"; it is no sin in weaker souls if they anticipate the welcome of the gentle and familiar faces whose radiance will shine on them always. For it is the golden threads of love which gleam through the mingled texture of our human life, that sign in it the name of God.

They Remember and Wait.

"THEY without us shall not be made perfect"; "they without us" could not, if we might dare to say it, be made perfect even by the love of God. The perfection of the blessed dead cannot be achieved till the living they wait for come. We feel that we are not worthy now to loose their shoe-latchet, or to touch their garments' hem; but since love is love, that must not trouble us. While they complete themselves in regions beyond our view, we are to remember them, to look for them, to prepare for them. We must try to keep the straight path, so far as we can see it, to seek that we may reach the spirit-land unsoiled

and noble. They remember us, they wait for us, they will welcome us. They are saying, if we had ears to hear, "Dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown; so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."

Joy of the Blessed Dead.

DO we remember that women in heaven are always receiving their dead? They are expecting them, and they are welcoming them. The happiness of the blessed is buoyant and elastic, not passionless, dreamless, changeless.

We have all felt when some died that it was only as it should be, that they were more needed in the other world even than they could be in this, that some heart had a greater claim upon them, and could not be content without them, and it has seemed as if their welcome must not be delayed any longer, and as if it were left to us simply for the future to make sure that we are come to the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect. The joys of the angels we know are made more poignant and keen by the repentance of souls. The joys of the blessed dead are immeasurably heightened by the receiving of their own.

"*Smiling in the old forms.*"

IT is in his interpretation of the closing lines that we really differ from Dr. Zelie. He says: "What were the angel faces which he had loved long since and lost awhile?" He replies that they were the

earliest and best of his first purposes and ambitions and visions. "Reunion with faded interests and lost ideals and possibilities, of which we sometimes have hardly the heart to think, is the reunion to which the hymn seems to point, and with that every other recovery seems both sure and possible." Dr. Zelie is eloquent in his exposition of this view, but we cannot accept it. Say rather that the lines mean what they seem to mean. The brighter ideals of early life are poor and narrow and dim. As we pass on out of the gloom and into the day we see them tarnished and faded. Higher ideals will meet us on the holy hill of God. But there are the beloved who belonged to our youth and are now out of reach, and the pilgrims, if left lonely, crave to behold them again. One chief solace of the journey is that with each step we are nearing them. So many whom we love are there, the nearest and the dearest, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, friends, and perhaps strangest of all, the children who, as we hoped, would take our places and bear our names on earth. The pilgrimage is towards them and Christ and the morning. We look to see them smiling in the old forms, touched with an immortal brightness in the presence of the Redeemer, when we have taken leave of death and darkness for good and all.

Very Far Better

WE shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him. Disclosures incomparably more vivid and more potent than we have ever dreamed of

will be granted us when the earthly house of this Tabernacle is dissolved. The soul will be encircled and absorbed in the consciousness of God. "With Christ" is the one piercing word that tears clear the whole clouded heaven to the Apostle—"With Christ, which is very far better." Who shall tell what is covered by the word "very far"? Whatever it is, it is enough. "With great mercies will I gather thee," is the divine sentence whispered to the soul. A spiritual operation, it is said, demands a spiritual energy. Yes, but this spiritual energy is exerted on certain conditions, and these conditions are realised in dying. There is then the entire union of the human and the divine. For our part, we take no interest in the speculations as to the rationale of this transformation. We may say with Delitzsch that the sanctifying power of faith bursts forth at death, and that the sight of the reality of what is believed will wipe out all sin. We may add with Phillippi that a creative, miraculous act of God always coincides in the death of true believers. But the air is too rarefied. It is wise rather to raise our thoughts to the few illuminated points in the mysterious region, the suns and planets which light up the darkness, and for the rest to lean upon God, and look with calmness into the mysteries which He still leaves so deep around us. These untravelled worlds are more immediately than this within the region of God's rule, and we shall find within them when the time comes the fullness of content.

With Open Eyes.

THERE is another experience which can never be forgotten. The veil of night is suddenly lifted, and all the wild longings of unavailing years are in a moment stilled. Some of us can remember the day when the steady, silent heartache of disappointment vanished, and we looked on the past with peace, and the sore heart was healed. There are fairer lands than Bithynia, and God may bring us in and fill our mouth with laughter and our tongue with singing.

But we must be in Jerusalem, in our Mother's arms, before we see all, before we see that in all points God was just and faithful and loving. "Most of our prayers," said Thomas Boston, "are answered in the other world, and they are answered all at once."

We "shall wake and remember—and understand."

The Supreme Moment.

THE threshold has been crossed, the soul that has entered into the city is beholding the Wonder of its wonders. The Stone which the builders refused is become the Head Stone of the corner. "I will praise Thee, for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation." The spirit catches at broken reeds no more. It sees the lilies that flower above them. It lets the world go, and takes love.

The Lord and the Thief.

THE Lord's ear was very heavy, but not heavy that it could not hear the thief. His arm was shortened, nailed to the wood, but not shortened that it could not save. That day the Lord and the thief were together in the new country. If thou seek Him He will be found of thee. Before we speak He calls, that we may turn round to Him and say, "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My Face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy Face, Lord, will I seek."

Together

IN our harsh, fighting, earthly days, love was much to us, but it was limited. It struggled often for expression. It was frequently darkened by misunderstanding, and only now and then did it attain a heavenly completeness. Those times we all look back upon as the only times when we really lived fully, and drew the breath of the eternal world. Our beloved dead are waiting as eagerly to tell us their story as we are to tell them ours. We shall be together in days of loyal life when all failures of the past may be forgotten, just as though no break had been at all. How well it is with the dead! How happy we should be if they "look us through and through"! They are not to be sought in unshared deeps through which their spirits wander fatigued. The companions of the devout life are but removed, as it were, a hand's-breadth from us, but they without us shall not be made perfect. We cannot think of them as they were

when sinking under the weight of illness and broken with the burden of the years. Nay, we think of them as satisfied with good things and crowned with loving-kindness, so that their youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Healed and Nourished.

IT will be a life of joy. The blessed dead have had too many failures, too many wounds. Heaven will be a place of healing where God keeps all the treasures that He gave and that we let fall. The spirit will be nourished with constant influxes of divine blessedness and constant new visions of God. The body will know no weariness, will need no repose, will have impressed on it no necessity of dying. All these things are left behind. Most of the saints were very weary when they sank into their last sleep, but they will never know weariness in the eternity to come.

Unchanged.

IT is certain that we shall know them in the world of Eternity as we knew them—and far better than we knew them—in the world of Time. What endures is the love and trust that bound us.

"*Them that are asleep.*"

CONCERNING them that are awake . . the enterprising Press will collect all the information that is possible and supply all the comment that is

needful. "Concerning them that are asleep" . . . no one can speak with authority, save from the Book of God. If the preacher only knew it, his hearers care most to know about those who are beyond their ken, to see the open vista of eternity, to have revealed the wonder and the bloom of another world than this, to follow the white sails rounding the white misty capes of death.

Sweet Certainty.

IF we open the windows of the heart towards the Heavenly Jerusalem we shall hear the song on the crystal sea. We shall behold the walls and towers bright with perpetual sunshine. We shall know the city for our own true home and mother, and anticipate with an interior sweetness of certainty the New Year of the Resurrection.

"*It is not so sad.*"

THE dead have left us; but they have not forsaken us. They have left us, and we thrill to the heart of hearts with the memory of their going.

> "Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand
> And the sound of a voice that is still!"

and the unreturning grace of a dead day! There is nothing in life quite so hard to bear as the silence of the departed. But we know that they are with

Christ in Paradise, and we look to join them there. "They without us." How is it with them now in that happy land of souls, where they are waiting for us and helping to prepare our place? Our own poet, George Macdonald, makes the dying son say.

> "I'm gaun hame to see my mither,
> She'll be weel acquant or this,
> Sair we'll gaze at ane anither,
> 'Tween the auld word and new kiss."

But is this all? Have we no communication from them? I remember the saying of Eugénie de Guérin: "If I lived near a king and you were in prison, assuredly I should send you everything I could from the court."

And I recall the lines of George Wither:

> "For it is not time nor place
> That can much divide us two,
> Though it part us or a space;
> Neither shall be left alone
> When asunder we are gone;
> I in thee, and thou in me,
> Shall for ever dwelling be."

We have a higher word than any of these. "Whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him!" I can see that thus the blessed dead hold the right hand of Christ and walk in the light with Him. We have His left hand and are in twilight, but He is between us holding both, and may it not be that through Him new currents of covenanting love secretly pass between the companies of the one family who dwell in Him? I believe it, and life would

be a very poor thing for many a bereaved soul if it had only the memories of those who have gone and taken half the heart with them. It is not so sad, not near so sad, if we realise our oneness in the ever-present Redeemer

"DIED IN THE WAR"

*The Dear Expected.**

THESE dear lads, struck to the ground, came into a world where a place was prepared for them. Before they entered it many a loving thought had been given to making ready for them. The garments in which they were first arrayed were the handiwork of their mothers.

> "Little caps in secret sewn,
> And hid in many a quiet nook."

They were received, most of them, with the gladdest and most loving welcome. So when they pass to the other side, to the new country, they are waited for. They are expected. All the things they need are ready. Their needs are anticipated and supplied, and the home of each differs from the home of every other. Nothing is too good for them. Everything must be the best. Our Lord is engaged in preparing and in interceding. He does not take any of His redeemed till the fruits are all mellow and the flowers are all full blown.

* Written in war-time.

V COMFORT AND HOPE

V COMFORT AND HOPE

SHORT MEDITATIONS

"How is our work being done? Patiently, faithfully, diligently? Has that long restlessness been tamed at last?"

His Poverty.

THERE is something suggestive in His request, "Show me a penny." Evidently He did not possess one, and when He died He left nothing behind Him but the garment for which they threw dice beneath the tree.

Alive and Aware.

IT was said of Christ Himself that He was obedient unto death—in other words, a listener unto death. From the first to the last Our Lord was listening, always listening for the still, small voice of God. If you listen, you will hear that voice everywhere.

Walking in a wood this afternoon, I thought of Balzac's words on the subduing and mysterious influence of a forest, which he ascribes to the sublime and subtle effect of the presence of so many creatures, all obedient to their destinies, immovable in submission. Christ was always listening to the voice of nature, to the voice of men, to the multitude on whom he had compassion. And God spoke through them to His soul.

Without Rest or Haste.

HOW old was He when He said, "It is finished"? No one can tell to a year, though we all know He was young; but He had had the twelve hours of His day measured out to Him, and when the night came His work was done. He wished no more. Without rest He lived, but without haste; no one ever did so much, and no one was ever so free from the timorous hurry of unbelief. Time is always long enough, when we are sure that our times are in God's hand.

The Disciple meditates.

HAVE we not promised to follow Him? Did we not say "Where Thou lodgest I will lodge"? Not in the great house of splendour, but beneath the humble roof, or under the stars. Said I not, "Where Thou diest I will die?" and as Thou didst die on the cross, let me die on mine.

The Secret Cross.

NO Christian has the right to say to another, What is your cross? What seems to be the cross in many cases is no cross at all. There are multitudes to whom it would be no cross to give up what they possess. Their Master knows that they should carry a cross, and He has appointed it, and it is being carried. But that cross is no more known

to the world than is the new name on the white stone. Therefore, judgment of one another as concerns the cross is one of the most dangerous and presumptuous ventures that can be imagined. Young people, and older people too, for that matter, may be prescribing for others a cross which would be light as air in comparison with the secret burdens they are bearing. In the wonderful history of Xavier there is one passage which has struck us as the most significant of all in his life. We are told that this high-hearted and triumphant missionary once found the saying "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it" very hard to believe. Is it too much to say that this momentary unbelief may have been in reality the loftiest mood of this mighty spirit? May it not be an echo of that word of Christ in the hour of His nearing Passion, "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say?"

Stars and Spring Winds.

THERE is something that touches the heart in the home-sickness of the greater mediæval writers. The appellation of man, Viator the Traveller, the application of the word Patria as a technical name for heaven, the use of such words as illic and ibi without any other explanation, as if there could be but one there to a Christian, are very notable. But life outside of Bithynia is full of merciful wonders, of gladdening surprises. Even here those who stand still may see the salvation of the Lord. You behold

new lights replacing those that have died out from the sky. The bare and barren land is as meadows that are waiting for the spring winds.

Where Rest is to be found.

THE whole object of the Redeemer's work, His dying, His rising, His ascension, His intercession, is to bring men to God the Father. It is when we are brought to God that the fever leaves us, and we are at rest. Too much have we preached, many of us, not the Giver but the gifts. The soul cries out "Not Thine, but Thee."

The Deafness of Christ.

IT was He who heard so well the lightest whisper of God. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart." What response ever came so quickly as our Lord's, "Lo, I come"? To be obedient means to listen, and He was a listener unto death. But how deaf He was sometimes; deaf to Satan, deaf to his friends, deaf to His human enemies! How deaf when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness; how deaf to His friends when they sought to alter His course; how deaf to Peter when he said, "This shall not be unto Thee"; how deaf in the Judgment Hall when they asked Him, Whence art Thou? "Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee?" The Incarnate Word stood with locked lips before Pilate, and answered

only with a boding, fateful silence to questions such as these. And how supremely deaf when they called to Him, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross!"

But in the same way He was deaf not only to counsels of evil, but to much that seemed legitimate. Here, also, it appears as if many pleasant voices that spoke to Him might have been heeded without sin, and to His happiness. There are voices we think ourselves right in heeding which He might have heeded too. His life might have been richer, easier, more solaced, but He made sharp choices and stern renunciations and swift decisions, and so the fullness of life was not for Him, and the allurement and appeal were in vain.

The Voice of the Fountain.

HE has leisure to mark the pain of the body: "I thirst." The voice of the Fountain! It was He who had made the land alive with the ripple of sweet water: the Creator of cool wells, of running brooks, of broad rivers. He thirsted!

Walking with Christ.

IF we walk with thoughts and words of Christ, He will join us in our journey. He will open our ears and seal our instruction. It is His manner to join those who walk. It is His manner not to give knowledge to His disciples that they may walk, but to give it as they walk. When Christ reads His word

with us the letters are legible only to those who run. In his company, travelling by His side, we know what it is to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

The Divine Voice

WE are near the truth when our hearts are disposed to the mind of the Spirit and yielded up to His guidance, and only then. We are of those whom Christ loves best when we sit at His feet and hear His words, fresh and new in His gospels. It is when we die to our own proud and idle dreams, and hearken to the Beloved Son in whom God is well pleased, that the unfathomed secrets disclose their deep significance to the true and pure-hearted searcher. This is the way to Divine knowledge, and there is no other.

The Successful Search.

WHEN one comes to think, there must be many households where one is recognised as the best seeker, and is thereby endeared. The best seeker is not merely the most earnest seeker, but the most successful. What is needed for a good seeker? Mind, for one thing. Carlyle speaks of his wife's sense and wisdom, of her intellect, shining luminous in every direction, the highest and the lowest. He pays tribute to her just discernment and her swiftness of decision. It is not easy to draw a sharp line between the mind and the heart. The one acts with the other, and neither by itself suffices. For the true seeker

there must be sympathy with the loser. It is this sympathy that gives the key to much that may have happened, and that prompts the continuance of search after long and frequent discouragements. Is there such a thing as sympathy with what is lost? In the old books about animal magnetism we used to find stories about what was called "trace." The idea was that objects bore a trace left upon them by their owners or previous owners, and not only by the owners but by the persons closely connected with the owners, and by other objects closely connected with the subjects under investigation. We will not attempt to give illustrations. Suffice it to say that for seeking there seems to be necessary a form of mystical understanding which it is not easy to express in words.

We are on surer and simpler ground when we say that, for successful seeking, there must be concentration and patience.

A WORD TO THE OLD

" A man should be content if he has had his day, and a day does not stretch over all the years of a long lifetime."

As the Years pass.

THOSE who have lost hold of the living Truth, and have been content with lower aims, may grow sadder every year. Not so those who have a clear and calm reply to the deep questions of the spirit, and whose own salvation is nearer—so much nearer—than when they first believed.

Never forsaken

THE servants of Christ mourn in decaying years how strangely little they have ever done, and they sorrow most of all because they can do no more. And they are about to grasp the sceptre of dominion ! They are appointed to a kingdom which has no seeds of dissolution or decay—but which must move with the rest ever nearer to the Sun of suns, till every kingdom is merged in one, and God is all in all.

The Inner Life.

YOUTH demands victory and cannot wait. It grows weary in a long and losing fight. But if we have learned to offer the sacrifice of praise upon

the altar, we need not covet youth, God has provided some better thing for us. We know it, even when we see ourselves grey-headed and wrinkled in the mirror and feel that the battle is as much as ever we can fight, and the race as much as ever we can run. We have learned to give thanks as the tide of battle rolls this way and that. The inner life wells up as the outer sinks into the ground. There is within us something better than the light-heartedness of youth: a joy, a buoyancy, a confidence, which the world cannot give and cannot take away.

A WORD TO THE MIDDLE-AGED

"Let everybody who is dissatisfied with the shape his existence is taking, look into his heart and ask whether the secret is not in the commonplace and vulgar vice of laziness. It is so, for the main part."

"*And yet I should like*——"

WHAT dreams we had of devoutness, of holiness, of success, of perfect unity, love and concord! What dreams we had of our own ascending, and oh, how far short we are of what we looked to be and might have been! It seems now as if a stern and grey day of the Lord had come down upon the once roseate life, and made it poor and cold. This is the true crisis in the life of the Christian servant, none the less real because it is so little spoken of.

We are not allowed to die, and we must not give up. We are not allowed to die, although it is always better in a sense for the Christian to die than to live. Yet it is always better to live so long as we can do God's will and God's work, and we can do it, though in another fashion. It is not as it was with us at the beginning. Dreams may be dispersed, hopes may have grown chill, efforts may have failed, love may have been lost, and goodness may have been trodden down. No longer do we walk on the green paths, no longer are we admired or applauded. At the best

there is before us the dusty road of common duty, and it may be that the burning sand of the desert is beneath our feet. And yet we are not going to give up. There is something in the Christian heart that silently protests. "I think I have done enough, and yet I should like——" "And yet I should like——" That is the undertone that will save us. It is with that feeling, by God's grace, that we may be able to turn the battle at the gates. Forts which temptation never reached before are now attacked, but we will not suffer them to be carried. And if we understood it, this is just the point when the nobler life begins

A WORD TO THE YOUNG

"I cannot pray, would that I could," is surely a prayer which will reach its destination, though the sender knows it not.

To the Heavy-hearted.

HE has promised to be with us to the end of the world, and He will winter with us through the dark, cold years until the winter ends, until we pass from the turmoil of this world to the peace of that. And for you who are not yet clothed in sackcloth, for you whose peace has not yet been broken by the dark sorrows of life, He is the Friend of friends. I know that a young heart may be very heavy. I know that the ancient thirst of humanity is in the most joyous spirit and will crave for satisfaction. This morning your hopes may be high, but in your souls there is always that low cry for rest, that low cry which swells at last into passionate weeping if the rest is not given. You have the hard things of life before you, but you need not fear them if you win the hope that is in Jesus Christ, or rather if you win Him, for He is the hope. "Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us a kingdom of priests unto God, even the Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Might we all join at last in that triumphal cry!

GREAT WRITERS

"In the matter of reading, I have long found it supremely useful to read everything twice over if I wished to retain it, and to read it a second time with increased solicitude."

HENRIK IBSEN

The Unfaltering.

THE business of Ibsen has been to tear off the last mask from the unbearable face of truth. Because he has done so, his writings have been received with howls of execration.

BALZAC

I

A Christian Novelist.

BALZAC, whatever else may be said about him, is assuredly the greatest of Christian novelists, by far the most profound interpreter of that mystery of expiation and redemption which is at the heart of Christianity.

II

"The Country Pastor"

WHERE in the literature of fiction can one find so complete an exposition on remorse and expiation as that, for example, in his book, *The*

Country Pastor? His great intellect and noble heart rested devoutly on the experience of the saints. He found no difficulty in the humble acceptance of the Christian creed and one can imagine what scorn would have been awakened in him by the gaunt and forlorn structure which is dressed out and set forth among us anew as the Christian faith. How often, even in his least congenial writing, when he seems abandoned to the spirit of cynicism, does his faith flash up and drive it out of sight? There be those who, with Matthew Arnold, still hear the melancholy, long-withdrawing roar of the sea of faith as it steadily retreats and leaves the barren shingles naked. Others, more wise, hear the wave of joy and hope that is to lift the world, coming nearer and nearer.

DR. JOHN BROWN

Of "Rab and his Friends."

IT has been said that no man gained a literary reputation so easily as Dr. John Brown did. He wrote no sustained work; the fragments he collected represent practically all his output. They are of very unequal value. They are full of repetitions and quotations. If all the quoted matter were struck out, not much would be left. Yet they live, and may very well survive much that is more ambitious. They are all tinged by an exquisite individuality. Perhaps their chief characteristic is their benignity, and benignity joined to power is the rarest quality in the

world. Let anyone try to pick out in a great audience the faces that are at once benignant and strong, and he will understand what I mean.

When all is said and done, it is the benignity that looked from Dr. Brown's face and looks from his writings which is his passport to immortality. He was "determined not to execute a large order," and he did not; but much will perish ere he be forgotten.

ROBERT BROWNING

The Preacher's Poet.

NO one has preached so powerfully the shallowness of unbelief, the corruption of man's heart, the superiority of religion over morality, the doctrine of a special providence, the fulfilment of God's will in history, and other things hard to be understood. But among all his religious writings we question whether there is any more precious, more profound, more satisfying than that found in his last book, *Asolando*. It is the poem "Reverie" beginning:

> "I know there shall dawn a day—
> Is it here on homely earth?
> Is it yonder, worlds away,
> Where the strange and new have birth,
> That Power comes full in play?"

In it Calvinists will find the soul of their philosophy, their theology, and their dreams.

NEW ENGLANDERS

A Notable School.

THE Puritanism of New England created a school to which the only affinities I can think of are to be found among the Swiss Protestants. The Warners, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Julia Ward Howe, Mrs. Whitney, and a few others are comparable with Godet and Vinet and Amiel. There is about them a kind of frosty purity, with an edge of fire.

The Authoress of "Uncle Tom."

MRS. BEECHER STOWE had her share of those trials that search the heart and reins, and she knew we shall never be rid of them. She recognised that the most awful and appalling words of Scripture were uttered by Christ himself. She took refuge in Him, the Lord of all worlds with all power given to Him. He would hide her till the storm of life was past, and then—

> "One view of Jesus as He is
> Will strike all sin for ever dead."

This faith shines out clearly from all that she has written. In all her perplexities she never ceased to love Christ, and to believe that He came out from God.

CHARLES KINGSLEY

The Hero.

KINGSLEY remains to us one of the men who are more and greater than their books. His biography may be read when his novels are forgotten. It

is the picture of strong nature ennobled by self-conquest. Bunyan says of one among his friends that he was "a stranger to much conflict with the devil." He would never have said that about Kingsley. Kingsley was led into temptation and delivered from evil. He was to those in his home a hero. His naturally hot temper was strictly under control, and his constant tenderness and unselfish affection endeared him to all. He took pupils, and one of them thinks that even his biography does not do full justice to his wit, his vitality, his fun. But we can picture to ourselves, and always with delight, that swarthy, bright-eyed, eager man, always indignant at oppression, always helpful to weakness, noble and ennobling, whatever his mistakes might have been.

It is pleasant to read recollections of Eversley Rectory in Kingsley's time. His wife, most tenderly loved, was the companion of all his interests. She was described by Mrs. Beecher Stowe as "a real Spanish beauty."

TWO CARDINALS

"There is no need to lose heart amid the mists and vapours that sometimes shroud the City of God."

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

A Great Spirit.

HE was a most gracious and assiduous correspondent, and a proper selection from the immense mass of his letters should be an English classic. When strangers of other Churches sent him their books, he did not put them off with formal acknowledgments, but found time to read the volumes, and commend them if he could. But of his countless deeds of charity volumes might be written. Of the spirit of his life and thought—sensitive, yearning, lifted up to God—a picture hung in his room at the Oratory impressively spoke. It was a view of Oxford, on which he had written, *Fili hominis, putasne vivent ossa ista? Domine Deus, tu nosti?* Son of man, can these bones live? O, Lord God, Thou knowest.

MANNING

The Cardinal who cared.

WE are certain that in much he showed ministers of other Churches an example which must be taken, if the Church and the labouring classes are not to part company for ever.

MIGHTY WORKERS

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Is that true? If it is, then nothing else matters much any more.

DR. MARCUS DODS

I

His Concentration.

WHEN I first knew him he would not read the newspaper in the morning until the task of the day had been fulfilled, and so it was with him always. He was not to be turned aside, and he knew that achievement must come through the constant accumulation of self-limitings, self-sacrifices, reservations, denials. All his years on to the very last he acted out this belief. Nothing slovenly, nothing perfunctory, ever came from his hand. He was as exacting with himself when he had risen to fame and position, as in the days when he was an obscure and disappointed probationer. Underlying all was a certain modest consciousness of power. He knew that it was in him if he only had the chance.

II

His Four Qualifications.

CAN success in life be commanded? Not quite. There are walls that cannot be scaled, but upon the whole a certain measure of victory may be reached

by any man with four special qualifications. These qualifications are (1) a definite object in view ; (2) a determination not to be defeated ; (3) the capacity of exercising continual self-denial ; and (4) a certain belief in one's powers. Marcus Dods had all these qualities. In spite of the discouragements heaped upon him, he had a certain quiet confidence that the work of the ministry was that to which he was called, also that his sphere of work lay in this land and not outside.

BENJAMIN JOWETT

A Spur to his Friends.

MANY who lived outside the sphere of his influence must have been somewhat puzzled at the great place Dr. Jowett filled in life, and the sense of loss caused by his death. It is not accounted for by his eloquence, or his scholarship, least of all by his witticisms. Jowett urged upon his friends, old and young, the paramount duty of work, setting the example himself to the very end. After the unresting labours of his college, he would devote himself during vacation to the dull drudgery of teaching. As a friend he showed himself friendly by ever inciting to further attempts. He pressed Lord Tennyson, after the *Idylls* were completed, to do something equally great. So fully was his time occupied that,

when trying to find place for some duty of benevolence, he discovered that his only vacant hour was between one and two in the morning. There is much in this to ponder deeply. More lives, perhaps, are wrecked by sloth than by any other vice.

EASTER

"Let us be sure that Christ is in the dark room, keeping the soul that is dear to Him alive."

Loving Themselves.

WHAT anguished hearts need is the Easter assurance of life. For we cannot, try as we may, love the dead as dead. We may, and we do, love their memories; but if we love themselves, then they are living. Love is for life; it cannot dwell with death.

The Resurrection Faith.

CHRIST is risen! The smitten soul holds by its anchored trust, through the open resurrection gate. He looks back upon us, and we know that there is a heart in the world, a reward for toil, a reason for suffering, a great gathering together of life and thought and love to Him who will interpret to us the purpose of our days, crown in them what was begun worthily, and give back to our sight the vanished faces loved long and tenderly. . . . The Resurrection faith will save us from the desolate unbelief which thinks that all the messages of the living Christ have been

spoken to the dead, and that for us there is no word. He speaks, not to contradict any word that ever proceeded from His mouth, but to enlarge, to interpret, reconcile. He still leads the generations on.

CHRISTMAS-TIDE

"A child appeals to us specially because it so much needs us; and the Eternal Child, too, casts Himself upon us, in love and hope."

A Yule-tide Homily.

THERE are those who encourage and exhilarate by their very presence, who bring warmth and light into every place they enter. "I shall never forget the smile with which he greeted me the first time I ever spoke to him, more than six-and-twenty years ago, in the library at Ladywood. I have no doubt that numbers will say the same thing. It seems to me, as I look back upon those days, that the life to every one of us was changed and exalted by an acquaintance with him. Always and everywhere he was himself, and what a self it was!" Such was the testimony borne by the author of "John Inglesant" to an early friend. Then how much a word will do. Over thirty years one man recollects how another said to him in a crowded street, "That is very striking. I am very much obliged to you for telling me that."

The Value of a Word.

A WORD of heartening from a schoolmaster in childhood will be remembered when a thousand things apparently much more important are lost in the

azure. A word—how much it may mean! Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, was one of the most radiant natures in the world. When he died his friend Lord Lingen bore this testimony: "Both before and after he became a Bishop he not unfrequently stayed at my house; and I really can say without exaggeration that the very sight of him had the effect of sunshine both on the servants and ourselves. If ever there was a sociable and sympathetic man he was one, pleasantly inquisitive, and ready to talk to anyone. 'Which was the maid who cooked that nice dish?' said he one morning, after he had read prayers to us all, referring to something he had praised at dinner the day before." I might pursue this train indefinitely, but I turn to a practical suggestion.

The Fine Gift of a Letter.

WHEN Christmas approaches we all think about presents. Many of us have not very much to give. Many do not care for presents of the ordinary kind. We are satisfied with our possessions. What everyone values in a present is its fitness, the kind thought of remembrance which it embodies. Why should we not this Christmas send out a batch of kind, affectionate, and encouraging letters? This at least is within the power of us all, and who knows what happiness we might give, what cheer, what strength, what hope? We can call to mind by a little thinking friends and acquaintances with whom life had passed roughly during the year. Write to the friend far

away who is fighting a hard battle, and tell him what you think of his constancy. Write to the sick friend who fancies herself of no use in the world, and tell her that her life matters much to you. Write to the author whose book you have liked. Send no advice—there is a great deal too much advice in the world—send encouragement, words of recognition, of gratitude, of affection, of admiration, and send such words especially to those who are living through a time of great stress and trial. Your letter may decide the issue of the conflict.

A Thought for the Faithful.

AT Christmas the heart should be subdued and softened. The divine hope that is as dew on the thoughts of youth should be revived and the old tenderness restored. There may be no other Christmas for us in this world. We are nearer the end of all things. Here we have no continuing city, but at Christmas we recall that through Christ the new world is ours, and our life is but beginning. Now is our salvation nearer at hand than when we first believed. We go forth to meet it, and the still lights of the New Jerusalem burn and shine in welcome.

The Coming of the Child.

LOVE waited on Him when He came. True, He was laid in a manger, but he was laid there tenderly. He was trustful as children are trustful,

and there is nothing softens the heart more than a child's faith. Most of us grow world-weary. The time comes when we expect danger at every step, when the grey sisters enter our house and threaten to abide, when our idols turn to clay, and our eagerly sought prizes drop dead from our grasp. But we are healed from the disease of hardness by a little child who recalls the old time when we thought all men noble and all women faithful. Nothing, we repeat, is more beautiful than to be trusted once more, to be trusted as only a child will trust us. Now it is a true and salutary thought for Christmas that Christ needs us even as we need Him. It was love of us that brought Him here. It was to win us that the travail of His soul was passed through, and now, when the days of His flesh are over, now that He is ascended, we can look at Him in a new light. We remember what our earthly love was to Him; how when childhood was over He was left alone and desolate in a darkened world; how when He was yet young He suffered the pain which goes down to the very springs of life; how His heart was not light though His step was bold; how He was tempted and scourged, and rent at last by evil. And the thought that we slew Him should act on our unbelief and sloth and hardness of heart like fire, till the foremost passion of life should be to make the great reparation, and give ourselves to Him Who gave Himself for us.

The Eternal Child, like all children, came seeking for love.

VIGNETTES

"Some apparently enter life with recollection, as they might enter a place of prayer."

DEAN CHURCH

I

A Watcher of the Skies.

NO one ever mistook him for a careless Broad Churchman. There are really religious men whose tone is not religious; but his theology had unmistakably the ideal element. And he had, withal, the rare and commanding prophetic quality. He watched the far-off horizon of thought, and was conscious of the coming clouds and the still more distant sunshine.

II

Single-hearted.

THE Deanery of St. Paul's was literally forced upon him. For one thing, he loved the quiet, simple, homely life. Like his dear friend Mozley, he was very much at home with rustics. Both of them greatly admired the Rev. Samuel Richards, of Stowlangtoft, a perfect type of a country pastor, shedding the light of an equable and happy mind on his

neighbourhood, entering with whole-hearted sympathy into the life of his people, writing epitaphs for them in the village churchyard, and lying down by their side at last.

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE

HE was a delightful companion and a frank and simple host; a good Yorkshire pie sat at all times invitingly on his table, and his melodious voice would often summon a neighbouring chum to his fire-side for a chat through half the night. I do not know anything in the whole range of biography which gives a better account of the essence of popularity. Wilberforce made it good to the very end of his long, strenuous, and happy life.

BISHOP LIGHTFOOT

A Dedicated Life.

WE are most attracted by the signs of a lofty and austere piety which mark his episcopate as they did that of Joseph Butler. Many viewed with misgiving the ascetic life of the author of the *Analogy*, his melancholy forebodings, his solitary habits, the ornate chapel where he bowed before a silver cross. Lightfoot's piety found, perhaps, more legitimate channels of expression, but it was of the same type—lonely, intense, and pale. In this lies his chief, his true greatness; that *Ad Te quacunque vocas* was his guiding rule of life.

SIR WALTER BESANT

Tender of Heart.

HE was a very busy man, very systematic in his habits. He lived very quietly, and did not care to be disturbed. He was always ready for a fight and did his best to win, though I suspect he was at bottom a sensitive man and disliked controversy. But when a forlorn creature with no claim upon him sought his aid, everything was put aside. He would do anything, he would endure anything, he would forgive anything.

No one will ever know all that Sir Walter Besant did as a helper, but if we are to believe Christ, he was a Christian indeed, a Christian tried by the most exacting of tests, one who had that in him which will place him at the Right Hand when men who profess much more may be missing. This is what I should single out as the great characteristic of Sir Walter Besant, and if earth has anything fairer to show I do not know it.

THE ARCHBISHOP

Randall Davidson.

THE portrait of the Archbishop of Canterbury, by Mr. Sargent, attracted me very much. They say that Mr. Sargent is extremely successful in getting at the inner soul of his subjects. If that be so, and if he has done so in the case of the Archbishop,

he reveals to us a grave and anxious prince of the Church with a heavy weight of care and responsibility, borne as best may be. It is not a good likeness of the Archbishop as he appears to the public. The fresh rosy face, and the smiling gracious manner with which the public is familiar, are not represented here. Sometimes the excellent Archbishop's face and demeanour suggest the lines :

> " Then let come what come may,
> I shall have had my day."

I do not use these words in any disparaging way. It is not the worst mood of mind. It is the mood of those who do their best and think of what they have done, and leave the future to God and to those who come after them. But Mr. Sargent gives us a man on whom the weight of the present and the future is pressing.

CANON BENHAM

In Switzerland.

THERE is a pretty little English church in Murren. When we went the first Sunday morning we did not know the preacher's name. I was sure he was somebody ; the sensitive, mobile, wistful face said as much, even before the sermon had been reached. When it came, we found it packed full of brilliant things, and not without audacities like these : " The most contemptible figures in literature are minor poets " (this is my way of putting the sentiment—no doubt it was more decently veiled). It turned out that the chaplain was the genial Canon Benham, the

Walt Whitman.

AMERICA condemned him ; he lived in obscure poverty, accepting with dignity whatever his admirers here have sent him. But he did not die friendless, he did not die wretched, and what is best, he did not die sour, or bitter, or foiled, and those for whom his writings had a message, knew that he would not.

VISIONS

"The path of dust and dead leaves brings us to the Fountain."

A Religious Daily.

THE great enterprise—one of the certainties, one, I hope, of the certain successes—of the future, is a London religious daily which will circulate all over the country. That this is practicable I have no doubt.

Life Less Burdensome.

THE time will come, and it is not far off, when the greater evils of society will vanish. We shall extinguish pauperism, and wonder how we ever suffered it to exist. We shall somehow solve on Christian principles the discord between labour and capital. We shall prevail over the men who would have stood at the foot end of the Cross and chaffered for the coat without the seam. We shall vindicate the supremacy of conscience, and make life more equal, more just, less burdensome. "The poor shall not always be forgotten, the patient obedience of the meek shall not perish for ever." In the day to be the liberated victims of civilisation will see that everything good in their lot has come to them because

Christ descended. Mighty as is the lust for gold, there is one thing mightier, and that is the passion for righteousness.

"*Better Days*"

I HAVE a vision of better days, of days when that abomination of desolation, a childless Church, will be a monstrous impossibility, of days when each Sabbath morning the people will gather in our chapels to welcome the hopeful stir of fresh young life and the promise of its future and its endless possibilities, and when, instead of disheartened ministers, and diminishing companies of depressed worshippers, we shall have children and young men and maidens to bring their joy and their thanksgiving and their devotion to Him Who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God. Then will be blessedly fulfilled the great prophetic word, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children!"

The Undying Gospel.

CHRIST came nearly two thousand years ago to set the world on fire—has He done it? He has kindled a fire; that cannot be denied. The years are years of the Lord. But will it go out? Many hope that it will. They do their best to extinguish it. First put it out, some of them are telling us, and you will see what our science and politics will do for you. Many fear it. They give heed to despairing voices

at home and abroad and see the fire languishing and dying. But it shall never go out. It is burning, and it will spread till the whole world is caught and wrapped in its flames

Christ Eternal.

THERE is no future for Christianity, as there would be no past and no present, unless the living Lord Himself is united to every soul that trusts Him, and unless, through His Spirit, He ministers grace to each, day by day. It is because the living union of the soul with Christ is no dead bygone thing, but a thing in which we may share, that the Church survives. It is because Christ is the Lord of the present and the future that He continues to fill the past. The other personalities of history come and go, but He remains and will remain in the evening of the world—the One Solitary Figure against the daffodil sky.

" *Refuge !* "

HOW the world may end, none of us knows. The close may be in a great Armageddon, but Christ and His brotherhood—those who embrace Him by faith, those who have taken the Bread and Wine believingly—they are saved. If the world is to go on in the hope of progress and love, and of all those things that make life fair, Christ is the only leader, and there is no Christ but the Christ Who said, " Take, eat ; this is My Body broken for you." Yes,

we must expect a time of keen controversy and heart-searching trouble. So far as it is settled, it will only be settled by Christian influence. There is little present prospect, but we must hope. We may be sure that in our lifetime at least there will be troubles manifold. We are not to wonder at this. "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest" are words that still hold good, but from the community of the Church Militant there go over continually the troubled and weary souls that are to be welcomed to the Church Triumphant.

In my boyhood there was a revival in our village, and I remember, still, snatches of the spiritual songs which were favourites at that time. One of them had words like this :

> "On the other side of Jordan,
> In the sweet fields of Eden,
> Where the tree of life is blooming,
> There is rest for the weary,
> There is rest for you."

Mortals and Immortals.

DR. WILLIAM BARRY prophesied some years ago that all parties, governments, and even religions, will be divided by one clear line between the Mortals and the Immortals—between those who measure values by their relation to death which cuts off hope, and those who believe in the life everlasting. The victory of faith is sure. Unbelief, in whatever form it clothes itself, ends at the hateful cypresses which lift themselves above a vanishing world.

England and America.

WE look forward to a day when, in a great federation of peace and amity, the English-speaking lands will be united—when there will be two ruling Christian nations to secure and guard the peaceful progress of the world. This is the consummation most devoutly to be wished for, and those who believe in it and long for and work for it are not mere dreamers. They dream of that which is to come.

GOOD CHEER

" Narrow ways are well to tread
When there's moss beneath the footsteps,
Honeysuckle overhead."

From a favourite quotation.

The Comforter.

THAT so many a lonely heart is kept in perfect peace, that the hope of the future is still so fresh and sure, is proof that Christ has redeemed His word. He has not left us comfortless ; He has come to us.

Our Hope for the Future.

THAT the Christian possession of peace is not strikingly evident to the world is unquestionable. That many who should have it miss it, is equally plain. But the tendency at present is to forget that the deepest part of the Christian life must on earth be hidden. Its light must be pale in the lamp of clay. The doors of expression are too narrow for its sights and sounds ; and even if they were not, the eye sees what it has the capacity of seeing and no more. If Christ returned and lived thirty years as in Nazareth, at the house next us, would we, would the neighbours, take Him for anything wonderful ? Let the reader think, how little anyone knows the deepest things

in his own life. The day of manifestation will come, when the Sun of Righteousness will shine forth, and the Christian life be laid bare from its roots upward. Till then it is all the years a mystery, and at death it is only hidden a little deeper with Christ in God.

Joy Out of Thanks.

OF worldly reverses, as of all clouds, we may say that it is down their dim and misty slopes that the angels of purity and peace often draw near.

In His Hands.

A HOLY Power is at the roots of life—measuring itself with flesh and blood and the rulers of darkness. God is not a mere spectator: He is present in this clash of spiritual armies, His life is everywhere at work, counteracting death. His ministry in the deepest places of the redeemed soul goes ceaselessly forward, and thereby He revives within His people the ever-fading sense of His kingdom and power and glory.

The Certainties of Hope.

THE death of romance is the worst death of all, but those who are filled with the certainties of a noble faith, who always have in their ears the words of Jesus, "Lo, I am with you all the days," have an enthusiasm that remains. It does not need

to be fed by men's praises. When the freshness of youth has gone it abides: wearing still the many-coloured robe; the old sunshine falling on it, and the old charm remaining.

Life till the End.

IN Christ our youth is renewed like the eagle's. Time flows on, bringing his appointed signs. But grey hairs and diminished strength bear false witness against us if we are filled with the Holy Ghost. Whatever the past has been, the future may be better. If it has been barren and faithless, there is time to repair it; if it has been full of trust and labour, the time to come may be marked by faith more peaceful and labour more abundant. Age need touch our spirits as little as it touched the young angels in the holy grave, and life before God may be an ascent from height to height till we appear at last in Zion.

To those who Faint.

COMPASSION is the first word which describes the spirit of Christ. It is a deep word—deeper almost than love, as the mother knows who has seen her child in the delirium of fever.

Condemning None.

IS the truth about a man simply the truth about his present failures and sins? Suppose all these are known at their worst, is this a complete knowledge of the man? No. Knowing a man thus we may know

him as little as the dogs that licked the sores of Lazarus knew of the sweet soul that was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

Believers.

AS the natural force abates, we shall be reinforced with life from its Prince and Fountain, and when we are called to take the great journey, another will go with us—One who knows the way.

The Christian Ecstasy.

GRACE is the New Testament word for force ; and there are hours in every Christian life when the power of the Risen Christ is manifestly victorious over suffering and weakness. His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Against the most terrible antagonists faith makes her triumph good. When the fiery pillar of hope, followed through eager years, turns its dark side ; a strange buoyancy fills the spirit ; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We stand by the fresh grave, and look up to see a deeper rift in heaven. When it seems as if the earthly life with its strength and courage were slipping away from us, we look into the air, not empty of light, and see the descending city of God.

What is Possible.

IT is by saving ourselves that we save others, and only so. Work out your own salvation : that is our first business. It is indeed the one business of

life which is ours, our own. Nor could anything be shallower than the notion that this is selfish work.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with power. It is to be uplifted, relieved, vitalised, so that all life and every word becomes an effectual ministry of the Gospel. We all know it.

Strength and Safety.

THAT He is able to keep—not that we are able—is the secret of Christianity.

"*Nearer than Breathing.*"

THAT so many a lonely heart is kept in perfect peace, that the hope of the future is still so fresh and sure, is proof that Christ has redeemed His word. The narrow room is filled with the fragrance of the Tree of Life. He has not left us comfortless; He has come to us.

The Smoking Flax.

IT would be very hard to construct an apology for Christianity out of the conduct of average Christians. There are multitudes who are good and lovable, but spiritually commonplace. There are many who are good in a hard, dry way, but not lovable. There are many who are effusive in spiritual things, but who have a poor standard of life. Sometimes they are avaricious and mean, sometimes they are narrow

and uncharitable. Sometimes they seem to be without that high sense of honour which often characterises the natural man. What can be said about them is that the eternal life is within them in germ. It has much to fight with, but it will not yield. God has revealed Himself in these still dark and struggling souls. Their faces are set towards Him, and the spark will one day be a great light.

Jesus, still lead on.

LET us have all the more confidence in the end, if we must have less in the way. The appointed end is sure, though the time and track of progress may be and will be at variance with our hopes and dreams. Jesus has yet many things to say to us; we could not bear them now.

The Sacred Colours Luminous.

TO the faithful, Christ vouchsafes glimpses of sunshine in the grey weather; when all is done there is often the lustre of a great light. St. Paul forgot the weary march, and the cold bivouac, and the frequent repulse, as his days of ceaseless, earnest, serious zeal gathered themselves together to be poured out as a drink-offering before God. Life had come to its holy Saturday—the eve of the resurrection—and the glory of the Lord shone round about him. He—even he—saw the sacred colours luminous through age and death.

Our Country.

THE British nation, we are inclined to believe, is a great deal better and sounder than many of its shrillest censors of the moment. And for our part we find among our patient, brave, and silent people great seed-beds of trust and hope.

Old Acquaintance.

I CAN call up one venerable figure after another of whom I could say with assurance, "He never did naething that wasna' well intended." To know the higher natures of the world, the students of my time did not need to go beyond their own parishes.

VI. THINKING IT OVER

The Discoverer of Heaven.

I KNEW an old minister who had great happiness in his later years after reading Ruskin. He said Ruskin had enabled him to discover the sky, and so his life was doubled.

College Days in Aberdeen.

IT was strange and pleasant to see the strong affection between Dr. Lumsden and his young colleague, Robertson Smith. Smith was then a mere youth, twenty-four or twenty-five. Lumsden perceived at once his great qualities, his loyalty to the Free Church, and the immense potencies lodged in him. Smith responded to the old man's affection with warm and eager tenderness. They had many things in common—both were vehement Calvinists and equally vehement in their Free Churchism. It was a real pleasure to see the two drifting amicably down Union-street.

Dr. Alexander Bain of Aberdeen.

IN appearance he recalled Democritus in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, though he was not old at the time, "a little wearish old man, somewhat melancholy by nature, averse to company in his latter days, and much given to solitude." His scanty locks of hair were thriftily spread over his bald cranium. He wore no moustache, his chin was shaven, and his

face was surrounded with thick black hair. Thus his mouth was clear. His eyes and his mouth gave a certain impression of weariness and disenchantment. The face was not sad, either tragically or poetically. Its expression seemed to say : " Most things in life are irksome, teaching is irksome to me and learning to you. But we have to do our work without whining. I shall do mine, and I shall see that you do yours."

Assembly Clerks.

THE two most prominent figures in the Assembly after the Moderator were the clerks, who sat at a table in front of the chair, facing one another. They were in my time Sir Henry Wellwood Moncrieff and Dr. William Wilson. Sir Henry was the minister of a comparatively small and obscure congregation in Edinburgh : Dr. Wilson was the leading minister, perhaps the leading citizen, in Dundee. They were both portly and genial in appearance ; excellent business men and without question the ablest ecclesiastical lawyers in Scotland. They were entitled to take part in the business of the house ; in fact, they managed it, and with consummate skill. Sometimes they made speeches which were always listened to with profound attention. But the mere sight of them was best of all. It was better to watch them than to mind a dull speech. They both took snuff, and had large coloured silk handkerchiefs wherewith to meet the consequences. As a rule they kept writing their minutes diligently, except when some

great speech was going on or some beginner was getting through his maiden "effort," when (for they were the kindest of men) they would lift up broad, encouraging countenances. But when a man was making an ass of himself, they would sometimes look at each other with an expression which if I could render it on canvas would put me in easy circumstances for life. Once I saw their eyes meet when something particularly absurd was going on, and immediately after their coloured handkerchiefs appeared, and were used to cover their faces. It was not snuff, that time.

"*But—Mr. Chairman——*"

WE cannot help thinking that Dr. Glover's well-known perseverance in debates and committees was partly due to his training in Presbyterianism, where men were accustomed to rise to a point of order. One of the most brilliant of Baptists, after referring affectionately to Dr. Glover, mentioned this characteristic, and said that the words "But, Mr. Chairman——" should be inscribed on his tombstone. The last time we saw Dr. Glover was in the waiting-room at the Albert Hall when the great Baptist demonstration was held on the attainment of the quarter of a million fund. He came up with a smile on his face and said, "What are you doing here?" The reply was from the metrical psalms used in Scotland:

> "That I thy chosen's good may see
> And in their joy rejoice,
> And may with thine inheritance
> Triumph with cheerful voice."

He smiled all over his face. "I know that," he said; "you have given a very good reason."

The Church and Labouchere.

LABOUCHERE had a real interest in the Churches and was friendly to them. I ought to know, for I wrote many of the *Truth* paragraphs.

Dr. Marcus Dods.

THE mere sight of an envelope with his clear, firm writing on it sent a happy thrill through one.

Dr. Pulsford's Look.

YOU might have met him not long ago in his walks on Hampstead Heath, straight as a dart, with the fresh colour of health, with the burden of his many years pressing upon him lightly, and yet somehow unmistakably of those "who declare plainly that they seek a country."

A Stout Fellow.

ONE of our earliest recollections is of an old working man, who belonged to a little congregation which had a hard fight. He wore his Sunday coat year after year till it changed from black to green, and each week he went to his beloved sanctuary a

patient, devout toiler, with wages that one might suppose would do little more than keep body and soul together. Yet somehow he managed to subscribe £5 every year. How he brought the shillings together one can hardly imagine, but he went on in this way till perforce he had to give up his toil. "I'm as wullin' to work as ever I was, but I'm no' sae able."

COLLIER OF MANCHESTER

A Deep Heart.

AS one came to know him better his gifts grew more visible, and they were certainly of a most notable kind. He had a deep religious faith and a heart for evangelical piety. His life was drawn from deep wells. It was an education to see him, as I have seen him, for hours at his headquarters, receiving and dealing with the incessant troop of callers who wanted from him guidance and aid. He caught up the meaning of their requests in a trice, and what he could do to fulfil them that he did. He must often have been burdened by the sad need which confronted him, but of this I never saw him show a sign except that sometimes he would say that he had had a long day. He was not distracted by the calls made upon him. He knew what he could do and what he could not do. He was eminently sagacious in his judgments, no party man in any fanatical sense, ripe, wise, controlled, and with a deep affectionateness at the bottom of his nature. The mere sight of him was a means of grace.

A Man with Eyes.

I MET the other day an old college companion whom I had not seen for many years. He used to be a country minister, but has long preached in Melbourne. We talked about the difference between the country and the city, and the desire of many men to get away from the one into the other. I remarked that the isolation of the country, the want of congenial fellowship, was deeply felt by many who had been used to the most perfect of friendships—those between fellow students. He replied that he had never experienced this. In his country charge there were two men who satisfied his desire for society. One was the miller and one was the schoolmaster. Both were gifted and educated men, and the miller especially had a mind and a way in which Carlyle would have delighted. It is the old story. We crane our necks and look to the ends of the earth for that which is beside us.

In a Hampstead Garden.

WHEN Henry Ward Beecher was on his last visit to England he stayed with Dr. Parker at Hampstead. Mrs. O'Connor went up to read to Beecher Nelson Page's story, *Marse Chan.* She tells us that Dr. Parker objected. "Beecher," he said, "you are not going to listen to a whole story this hot afternoon." "Parker," Mr. Beecher said, "I am! This is my tea-party, and I am going to sit on

the floor with my head on mother's knee ('Mother' was his wife) and I am going to have a good cry. If you don't want to listen, go out in the garden." Dr. Parker stationed himself by the door ready to flee into the garden, but he never stirred until the story was finished, and even then he was unable to speak his thanks for a few moments, while his beautiful wife, in tears, was as deeply moved as Mr. Beecher himself.

About Matthew Arnold.

I HAVE had occasion to see at one time or another many letters written by Arnold to very humble authors—long letters too—answering with delicate courtesy the questions put to him, and criticising carefully. For this one cannot help loving Arnold.

An Italian Trip.

THE journey to Florence was wearisome, though it was a compensation to see Pisa with its tower leaning hard. It is pleasant to see anything living up to its reputation. I remembered Ruskin's striking passage on Pisa in his *Præterita*, where he gives his remarkable, and so far as I know, unnoticed definition of Christianity.

A Visit to Baring-Gould.

FROM Launceston we drove eight miles to Lew Trenchard, the residence of the Rev. S. Baring-Gould. Mr. Gould is a striking instance of a man

finding out late in life, and almost by accident, what he is best fitted for. He had been known as the author of innumerable religious, semi-religious, historical, biographical, and geographical works before he published his novel *Mehalah*, but that gave him a place in literature he had not previously attained.

Mehalah is a book which could not have been prophesied from any of its predecessors. The idea of it occurred to him when he was rector of East Mersea, near Colchester. He could not sleep one night as he lay listening to the weird sounds in the Essex Marshes; the story shaped itself and was rapidly written. It was refused by several publishers; at last it was accepted and bought for £50. It was a great success, and deservedly so, for it is a book fit to stand beside *Wuthering Heights*. Since then Mr. Gould has gone on writing novels; but he does not care for the business. It is, in fact, very irksome to him, although when he fairly gets into the story he is interested in his characters. He believes in local colour, and meditates a novel for every county in England.

On being asked how he got through so much work, Mr. Baring-Gould said that system and regular hours explained all. He has a beautiful study with a large collection of books, and his task is punctually accomplished each day. At present he is finishing a novel which is to appear in *Good Words* next year, and writing a book on the Deserts of Central France. I should be afraid to say in what time these tasks were to be performed. I should not be believed if I did.

In Spurgeon's Study.

IT was wonderful to see how much stillness there was in Mr. Spurgeon's full and eager life. It was impressive beyond words to observe him in his room of commentaries, all arranged in order, and to know how every commentary was consulted for his text, and how constantly he replenished his great mental and spiritual wealth.

Discovery of Ian Maclaren.

HE came up to London and stayed for a few days at my house. . . . I was so much struck with the racy stories and the character sketches with which Watson regaled us that I suggested that he should make some articles out of them. The idea had never struck him, and was at first unwelcome. But I kept on persuading him. I had no success till I was accompanying him to the station. Just before he said good-bye, he promised to try, and in a few days the sketch arrived. It was clever, but disappointing. I returned it to Watson, stating objections. He sent a second sketch also more or less unsatisfactory. Then he sent the first four chapters of what is now known as the *Bonnie Briar Bush* complete, and I knew on reading them that his popularity was assured.

He was amazed by the success of the *Bonnie Briar Bush.* "A cheerful blaze," he once remarked, and added quietly, "while it lasts."

RAMBLING REMARKS

"We are never wise, and we never grow unless we are more interested in the people we meet and see and hear than in ourselves. What does it matter what happens to us?"

A Fancy about Carlyle.

HOW would it have been with us if Thomas Carlyle had become a minister of the Church of Scotland, as he once purposed? It was remarked to me the other day by a distinguished theological professor that while the Scottish genius had been active and original in philosophy, it had been singularly undeveloped in theology. He attributed this to the yoke of the Confession of Faith. I do not know how that may be, but I do know that the country parish has apparently extinguished many a bright life of the University. Would Carlyle's light have been extinguished? I think not. What a preacher the man would have been! What would have happened to the Scottish Church Universities if Carlyle had brought into it his German notions? Imagine him in the General Assembly!

College Days in Aberdeen.

THE time which, when we look back, seems made up of diamond mornings and opal evenings, but which, while it passed, was grey and grave enough.

Dean Farrar.

HE fought clericalism at a cost which few can adequately estimate. Indeed, to our mind, Dean Farrar was simply the bravest man we ever knew.

About Gladstone.

THE problem is perhaps whether Gladstone was ethically a Jesuit.

Evangelical Peers.

I HAVE known two or three peers who gave evangelical addresses, and had a deep respect for every one of them. More than that, I have known them to do much good which they never knew of. They were neither snobs nor fools, nor did they show any particular liking for snobs or fools.

Origin of Mansfield.

DR. FAIRBAIRN was in existence, and therefore Mansfield College had to be built in Oxford. In other words, Dr. Fairbairn was the final cause of the College. Every explanation that comes short of this is to be pronounced shallow and superficial.

Glimpses of the Unseen.

GEORGE MACDONALD'S faults are essentially those of a visionary. His work is often blurred and hazy. It is seldom clear and firm for

many pages. Ere he has quite caught it and traced it, the dream is gone.

The Happiness of Robertson of Irvine.

HE drank from so many sources of delight that perhaps few earthly lives more refreshed and comforted ever passed into the world of spirits.

BISHOP WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

No Store of Wisdom.

WILBERFORCE was an early riser, he was always writing, always preaching, always travelling, and being a man of fine gifts, he won a great position. Yet his life on the whole was impaired and disappointed. He never succeeded in achieving the place of his ambition. He saw over and over again men preferred to him who were conspicuously his inferiors. He came under a general suspicion of insincerity. The Queen suspected him, and so did many of her subjects. Yet I think unprejudiced readers of his letters and journals will see that in intention he was always honest. What injured him was that he knew nothing. He read practically nothing, he was not in any sense a scholar ; he thought the time spent in study was wasted time.

He made a furious onslaught on Darwin. It is safe to say that Wilberforce had given moments to science where Darwin had given days, and his article is simply presumptuous nonsense. He rushed into a

fray about Bishop Hampden, and it turned out in the end that he had not read Hampden's books.

A Task that waits.

IF ever the life of Fox is to be written in a really satisfactory manner it must be by a woman of spiritual genius.

Certain.

PEOPLE make no excuses whatever for those who are fertile in making excuses for themselves.

Initiate.

WHOEVER knows that Jesus Christ has opened his eyes has a message for all the blind.

The Innocent Author.

GEORGE MACDONALD is one of the children who laugh and play in their Father's House.

Spiritual Currents.

SOMETIMES an event befalls very quietly with little interruption to the conversation, with little perceptible disturbance on the part of those who are concerned, and yet there is the consciousness that something for ever memorable has taken place. Some cord has snapped that we thought would hold for ever, the gulf has opened which can never be closed

and never be bridged, and yet the evening wears through peacefully, and we say good night to one another as if nothing had happened.

Catching up Hints.

THE wisdom of life is to know how to catch up hints and make the best of them.

Day by Day.

IT is a secret which we learn slowly—the secret of living by days. I am convinced that there are very few so precious.

The Grumbler.

THE querulous man is the most intolerable of associates.

One eminent writer whom I knew destroyed his career by his fretfulness.

Real Lives.

I WAS glad to see the big books. As one grows older, life and biography become more interesting, and I had rather read the story of a good man's struggle and victory than any novel.

After Long Experience.

IT is a rare thing to find anyone who can say "Thank you" pleasantly and gracefully.

On Courage.

WHAT is the highest form of courage? It is to be found, I think, not in the entrance into a sudden charge, but in the deliberate volunteering for a long, it may be a lifelong, campaign.

By the Goodness of God.

LET us make the most of the little we have, be happy as soon, as much, and as long as possible. Let us begin to play when three stars come out.

The Long Search.

I HAVE never known any man of whom I could say he read too widely. I have been looking out for that man all my life, and have failed to find him.

Advice to All.

IT is well to spend much time in youth reading the best with no ulterior view. All comes to its use in the end.

Four Evils.

MY experience and observation, such as they are, have taught me that four things cannot go on—carelessness, idleness, extravagance, and headiness.

Is Life a Test of Power?

THE real question is whether life is a test of power. I cannot believe it. Nothing that has happened has ever altered in the least my conviction that the ablest man in my class, and the ablest man I have ever known, was one whose name, if I were to print it, not a hundred of your readers would recognise. Some who have little do much with it; others never speak out, never speak at all. The University may have been more nearly right in its estimate than life; and both may be wrong. We are not yet come to the last tribunal.

Sheer Laziness.

IT would be very uncomfortable to walk sixty feet on a narrow plank. Yet this is what many people are doing. There is no margin in their knowledge.

Retrospect.

THE sources of failure are, I think, mainly timidity, temper, vanity, indolence, and want of adaptability, and these are so subtly intermingled that it is often difficult to distinguish between them.

Be Scrupulous.

JUDGE a man by what he does, and not by the way in which he does it. The latter is his business; it is not yours. We shall always want people like John Stuart Mill to write books about liberty.

Failure.

MORALISTS, so far as I remember, have hardly studied sufficiently the effect of prolonged discouragement on the human spirit. It acts upon some natures like poison.

Mrs. Oliphant.

TO one faith she was unswervingly true—the faith that it is better to live in the full sense than to vegetate. Sorrow, pain, conflict, labour—she understood what these things were, but she deliberately elected to have them instead of a monotonous, unperturbed, solitary existence. For to suffer was to live. We hope that someone fit for the task will collect and digest from her books her excellent wisdom upon the conduct of life.

When Offended.

IF we have taken what we think reasonable offence at the doings of a friend, we ought not to show it by an icy manner. It is our business to explain to our friend where he has apparently come short, and to hear what he says about it. In all probability with his explanation the misunderstanding will pass like a summer cloud.

The Mystery of the Unsuccessful.

SIR WALTER SCOTT said once, very pathetically, that no one flourished under his shadow. There are those whose shadow seems to carry fortune

with it. They may not be particularly successful themselves, but everyone who is associated with them profits by the association. Such things cannot be explained. I am convinced that about a great many comparative failures in life we can only say that somehow things have always been against them.

THE INNERMOST ROOM

"The religion that we need is a religion that will lay all the ghosts, that will cast the instruments of torture from the innermost room, that will divide the great glooms, and make it a place of repair.

"I love to think of the solitude of the soul. There is no characterisation of human beings that is more hateful and more false than the common saying that there is nothing in them. There is the innermost room. Every human soul is a mystery to the soul that knows it best, and should, therefore, be held sacred. Clouds and darkness are round about it."

The Duty of Life.

THE first thing is to be true, to labour with a sweet, composed, invincible energy till you love your work and rejoice in your work. That, no doubt, is the true path to what people call success; but I should much rather say that it is in itself success.

I

The Hidden Self.

I BELIEVE that every human being has an innermost room in his soul, into which he never admits anyone—perhaps because he cannot. When a boy, I was deeply impressed by a passage in John Foster's Journal in which he says that when he entered a company he was often shy at first, but was reassured when he bethought himself that, after all, no eyes could see what was passing within his soul.

It is true we are not known even when we are well known, by those who live with us, by those who are bound to us by the firmest ties, or by those who have shared with us the closest intimacies of friendship. We have deep secrets, all of us, even though there is nothing in our lives over which we try to cast a veil. We are not known even when we die, and all that can be revealed is revealed, when the secret drawer in our desk is opened, and the lock of the child's hair, "hair that drained the sun for gold," the two or three faded letters, the ring, the photograph, have all been looked upon reverently or irreverently. Our secret has died with us. They have not spared Charlotte Brontë. They have published almost every scrap of her handwriting, and sold almost every one of her few possessions, and criticised her, and theorised upon her without stint. But her secret went with her, I have no manner of doubt.

II

Its Furnishings.

LOOK around the innermost room, and you cannot explain how it has been built and furnished. It has built and furnished itself. You gaze at its pictures, its trinkets, its stains of blood, with a dull wonder at the sight of them. These, you think, should not be there. Other things should be there that have been of more consequence. There have been days in your life, apparently much more important days, that all may know of, when you were crowned

in the eyes of men, or visibly struck to the earth in humiliation or woe. How has it come to pass that these days are not recorded in the innermost room? There are faces that you have gazed into for years and years, and these have vanished; but on the walls of the innermost room other faces are hanging. The stress is not laid where observers might think it should be laid, where you think yourself it should lie. Life, as it shapes itself to you in the innermost room, has its days, its ghosts, its treasures, but how they have ranked and ranged themselves there you do not know, and therefore can never tell. That is why you cannot admit others into the innermost room, though you were ever so willing to bring them. There may be nothing to hide, but somehow no one can enter, because the door will open to none but yourself. You know that none may enter it now, and yet fancy that once there were those who entered it with you, and sigh for their presence.

It is a dream. The door was as fast to the dead as it is to the living.

A PAIR OF SPECTACLES

Their Many Uses.

I

ON the eyes of the soul we must put the spectacles of charity—to use a word which has a wide stretch of meaning. To begin with its full sense of love. There is nothing more derided than the raptures of a young affection. But it may be doubted whether any people in the world are so wise as young, true lovers. They see the best in each other, that best which may in the end be victorious over all that mars and flaws it, and outlast every evil element. For love not only sees, but draws out. It brings into action the highest energies of the soul, and calls forth its deep and shrouded beauties. They are happy indeed who maintain that vision through the tests and trials of life. You will remember Emerson's significant parable, Each and All.

> "The lover watched his graceful maid,
> As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,
> Nor knew her beauty's best attire
> Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
> At last she came to his hermitage,
> Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage:
> The gay enchantment was undone,
> A gentle wife, but fairy none."

That is not the end of the story if it is a story of true love. "Love is believing, and the best is truest."

II

TO look aright on human beings we must wear the spectacles of an indulgent kindliness. It is in this way we shall get the best and the most out of the world. There is a mawkish, silly, and indecent charity, but there are those who, without folly and without untruth, can think of what may be pleaded in mitigation of the worst of offenders.

III

I HAVE always liked very much the Spaniard who was partial to cherries, and put on spectacles to eat them in order that they might look bigger.

IV

I AM certain that there is no more fruitful cause of misery and mischief and injustice than prejudice. We need to have a special fear of ourselves when we come to speak or write of those who have opposed us, and perhaps injured us. Then the spectacles of fear that are always looking into the future and seeing a lion in every mouse should be smashed in pieces. We cannot see into the future, and the best provision we can make for it is to live the days wisely as they pass.

A HUMBLE AND FERVENT WISH

WHEN we die I suppose most of us will be found to have cherished a very few things. When the desk is opened the possessions that have perhaps mattered most will be discovered. Then there will be surprises. In the life of Hugh Price Hughes we are told that he kept very few letters, but in searching through his desk his wife came upon one from Dr. Jenkins. Mr. Hughes after a fierce controversy sent in his resignation to the President of his Church. Dr. Jenkins wrote an affectionate and earnest dissuasion, beseeching him not to take that step. Very likely this letter meant more to Mr. Hughes than any of the costly gifts he received and deserved. If I were to covet any honour of authorship it would be this—that some letters of mine might be found in the desks of my friends when their life struggle is ended.

A SUMMING-UP

Who shall Separate Us?

MAY we not find comfort in the thought that the suffering about which we cannot talk to any human being is not only known by Christ, but it is also felt by Christ? Is there not comfort also in the thought that, in Christ, we are joined to the great mystical body, and things are rough with us that they may be lighter for others? Every Christian sorrow, however dumb and obscure, wins something, or carries something away from another.

Make room for Christ. The true union is when He takes the place of us, when He is within us, as a second self, a second heart, a second conscience. That is the realisation of the union. But often we are not conscious that the union exists, though it is there. Christ lives within us, waking or sleeping, living or dying. Let us make room for Christ, that we may be counted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead.